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The
"SHAVETAIL"
AND OTHER STORIES

By
ISRAEL PUTNAM,
Author of
"Daniel Everton, Volunteer-Regular"



1904

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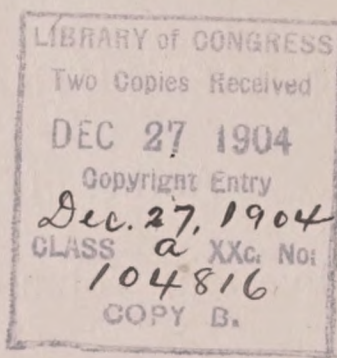
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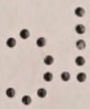
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O. I. S. Jan. 9, 1903-

TO JAMES F. SMITH,
Secretary of Public Instruction of the
Philippine Islands, Late Brigadier General,
United States Volunteers.

In Appreciation
of His Kindness to
ONE "SHAVETAIL."

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THE "SHAVETAIL"

OFFICIAL reports are sometimes as misleading as those which appear in newspapers. The material from which history is made is of a character to make the student of contemporary events wonder whether, after all, it is worth while reading the history of the past. It is from official reports and other documents that the history of a nation is made up and that such reports can, at times, give any but a true record of the events as they actually transpired it is the duty of this narrative to show.

If you search the records of the War Department at Washington you will find that Lieutenant Ira Benson of the —th United States Infantry was killed in action in the early Summer of 1899 shortly after joining the army. Under a different index will be found the name of Private Martin Travis, an enlisted man and a deserter, who came into the army from no one knows where—I myself would give much to learn—and went out of it branded as a deserter and a coward. That is the bare official record.

The facts of the case are radically different, as I learned them one night from the lips of a drunken, outcast white man, in a Nagasaki tea house. He was the only man who knew, and I have reason to believe that I am the only one he ever told. He drank himself to death two months later, and the Japanese woman, with whom he lived, and myself, were the only ones who were with him to the end and who followed him to his grave.

Now that he is dead I will tell the story as I learned it from him. I have suppressed the message which the dying man sent to his mother. She accepts the official record as a sad but glorious gospel and to the end that she may never be undecieved, I have given fictitious names to the characters and changed the locality of this story. Otherwise it is, in all material respects, a true record.

I.

The "Schofield" had been twenty-nine long days at sea; days of weariness and monotony to the old married majors, of disgust and a temporary relapse from patriotism to the soldiers, but to some few youngsters they were days of unending novelty. To one in particular this voyage was an entrance into a new and promising world.

Lieutenant Ira Benson he was on the register. "Cub Benson" was his sobriquet among the first lieutenants—men who had been out of the Academy for at least four years and who looked down with a fine sense of superiority upon each succeeding year's crop of Shavetails. When the President had singled out Benson from among the several million other young men of similar age and qualifications, as being especially fitted by reason of his "patriotism, fidelity and abilities," for a commission in the army, it is not unlikely that he did so as a mere matter of routine. Certainly he had never seen the youth whose appearance was not suggestive of any military possibilities. The fact that the boy's uncle, The Hon. Matthew Benson was an influential senator, may have had something to do with it. The Honorable Matthew had dropped in at the homestead in New Jersey one day not long before, and discovered that Ira since he had last observed him, had grown from boyhood into that period of acute boyhood which goes by the name of young manhood. Embryo manhood would be a better term. Ira was twenty-one.

It took the Honorable Matthew less than a week to discover that his nephew was unfit for business or professional life. And the uncle determined that the assured and certain career of the army was about the proper thing. The commission was secured, without much difficulty, and the name of Lieutenant Benson added to the roll of his country's defenders.

Ira had never been farther from his little country town than the academy in a neighboring city. He was as ignorant of all things pertaining to the military profession as it is possible for even a Shavetail to be.

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His ignorance was even more profound than is usually the case with a newly commissioned subaltern. As a rule there is an opportunity on the voyage for civil appointees to pick up some of the rudiments of soldiering. Nothing of the sort was the case on this particular trip of the "Schofield," however. The ranking officer on board was a major who was indifferent to the rising generation and the other officers took their cue from him.

Being unattached and coming to join his regiment, virtually the sole duty which fell to young Benson's lot was Officer of the Guard. He liked this duty. It pleased him to wander about the big half empty ship during the small hours of the night wearing a very new sword and receiving the salutes of the sentries.

During such hours he would let his imagination run riot and dream great dreams scattered all down the future years in which Captain, Colonel and General Benson played the star parts. But it is recorded nevertheless that the three Boards of Survey which fell to his lot during the voyage were returned for revision no less than five times.

The ever tedious business with the quarantine officials was over at last and Benson found himself free to go ashore and report. The Adjutant General looked him over casually and then gave him an order sending him to join his Company which was in the *barrio* of *Balit Balit*, a place of no importance in the hills somewhere to the north of Dagupan. Benson inquired how he was to get there.

"There is a supply train going out next week," said the A. G., "You can wait for that."

Here, at the outset, was a disappointment. Benson was impatient. Those were the Days of the Empire and reputations were being made—even by Shavetails. He asked if there was any objection to his starting immediately and was told that there was none. A stenographer who was pounding away in one corner of the room smiled and glanced with interest at the officer who was anxious to leave Manila, where there are clubs and ice, and hasten to the Provinces where there are ladrones and the dhobie itch. Benson left the office and went to breathe the lower atmosphere of first and second lieutenants at the Army and Navy Club.

Two days later he was riding slowly forward on his way to the little *barrio*, where his Company was stationed. He had learned the night before that there was no officer with the Company, the first sergeant having been in command for several months. This was in one way, pleasant news, to be commanding officer of a garrison was very fine. The fact that the garrison consisted of only some fifty men, of whom at least ten would probably be on sick report or in the guard house, did not serve to diminish the grandeur of his new position. But, nevertheless, as he ambled along on a spavined native pony, just in advance of and regulating his speed by, the bull-cart on which were his belongings, his head ached and his spirits were visibly depressed. This was due to two causes. One physical, the other mental.

The physical was what goes by the term "a head" and was due to drinking hard the previous night. On leaving home he had been asked by his mother to promise her not to drink. He had compromised by agreeing to drink only enough to keep up his position. His conscience troubled him as to how he had kept this promise. He might possibly have kept up his position (whatever the bibulous position of a Shavetail may be) but he had certainly not kept down his breakfast and his headache increased with each mile journeyed under the hot sun.

The mental depression troubled him even more. He began to realize that he was in what threatened to become an uncomfortable position. He was going off into a strange country to command some fifty men and he was unfitted to do it. It occurred to him for the first time that there might be some accurate knowledge required. Of this knowledge he did not possess the slightest smattering. He had been rushed into the army and out to the Philippines and had actually arrived at the present stage of his military career without having ever occupied a position in the line of file closers.

He began to have a nervous dread of his new administration, being afflicted with the one quality which is best calculated to insure failure in life—dislike of responsibility. This, and the dislike of work, are the two things which keep back the rank and file of men and make shining examples of the few. Some men have the love of work coupled with the dislike of responsibility. They are the largest class of producers, only they produce for the

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benefit of others. Benson combined the dislike of work with the dislike of responsibility. He was marked from boyhood with the mark of the men who fail.

It lacked but a few minutes of noon when he came to the bank of a small river which flowed leisurely along, fringed on either side with bamboo brake and shade trees. It looked wonderfully cool and refreshing. He dismounted and his native driver began to unhitch the caribao.

He took a liberal drink of whiskey and sat down to eat his lunch. In a few moments he began to feel wonderfully at peace with the world. Then he took another drink. The peace became a friendly alliance. The native retired farther down the stream to cook his rice. They could go no further until four in the afternoon. The caribao was luxuriating in the stream and the drowsiness of a tropical midday settled upon the earth.

II.

Benson stopped eating and looked up. A man had emerged from behind a clump of bamboo on the opposite shore. He was an American apparently, a white man certainly, and he wore a pair of kharki trousers and a blue flannel shirt. On his head was a tattered straw hat, such as the natives wear. He had not seen Benson.

"Hello" called the Shavetail.

The effect of this greeting was astounding. The man jumped, gave a glance at the young officer and then started to run.

"Here; Hold on. What's the matter with you? Come back!" shouted Benson, springing to his feet in amazement. The man turned instantly, looked at him searchingly and then up and down the bank. Seeing no one but the native driver he advanced cautiously.

"I beg your pardon?" he said, when he had arrived opposite the other. They were now divided only by the stream, which was shallow and across which there were a dozen stepping stones.

Benson advanced with a pleasurable cordiality. He had been lonely. "What made you run away like that? Come on over and have some lunch. I'm beastly lonely out here. I didn't know there was a white man in these parts. Come on over."

The other crossed the stream and advancing to Benson, took the hand which the young officer extended.

"You are very kind, I'm sure" he said. He had a pleasant, well modulated voice. "The truth is, I have met with an unfortunate experience. When you first called I mistook you for a native. I've been robbed of everything I had with me and turned loose."

Benson looked at him with keen and friendly interest. "You don't say? When did it happen? Tell me all about it. Have a drink and some lunch. Benson's my name of the — th."

"And my name is Martin. My story is a short one. I am a prospector and have been in this country for several weeks. Last night I put up in a shack a few miles from here. During the night the natives lifted everything I had. I am on my way to the railroad now. I shall have to go to Manila for a new outfit. Is that whiskey?"

Benson handed him the bottle and the tin cup. "Pitch right in and help yourself old man," he said, cordially. "You're playing in hard luck. I suppose there's no chance of finding the natives. Did you lose much?"

"I don't think there's any use in trying to find them. They have divided up all my poor belongings by this time. I lost about three hundred dollars, my clothes, and prospector's outfit—that's all. What are you doing up here?" As he ate he glanced continually behind them toward the road.

"I'm on my way up to join my Company at *Balit Balit*. I arrived day before yesterday in Manila on the 'Schofield' and pulled right out. Ever been up there?"

"To *Balit Balit*? No. I believe it's a little mountain village about six miles farther on along that trail. How long have you been in the army?"

"About two months" replied Benson with a shade of reluctance. He took another drink of whiskey which action caused Martin to glance at him. Martin had copper colored eyes and a prominent jaw. The eyes ran all over the young officer in a comprehensive glance. They lingered on his new six-

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shooter and ran around the cartridge belt of new leather, counting the rounds of ammunition. Everything about the Shavetail was new. His revolver creaked in its holster.

Martin finished his lunch and took another very small drink of whiskey. The Shavetail finished the bottle and held it up to the light. It was empty. He threw it into the river.

"I've another" he explained. "There's a whole case on the cart. You bet I know how to travel into the wilderness." He arose and took off his coat. "Here are some cigars; Smoke?"

Martin took one and lit it leisurely. They lay back under the trees and began to smoke. The only sounds were the purling of the river and the soft calls of some wild pigeon across the stream. The caribao had come out of the water and was grazing near at hand. Benson felt in a better humor. In a few minutes he would grow sleepy but at present he was inclined to be garrulous. This stage was observed by Martin.

He plied Benson with enough questions to keep the string of talk flowing incessantly and confine it to personal channels. During the next half hour the boy talked steadily and found Martin a kind and sympathetic listener. He told his age and all about his family and his life to date. He unburdened himself on the strength of the fear he had felt lest his ignorance of military affairs should embarrass him in his new position. Upon this point Martin reassured him nicely. He had a brother in the army once, he said, and there was nothing to it. The duties were soon learned and easily discharged. All you had to do was to be a good fellow. While Benson was discoursing on his ignorance the plans which had been suggested to Martin's active mind took more definite shape. About two o'clock the boy dropped off to sleep.

III.

When he awoke it was cooler. The sun had dropped below the bamboo at their backs and there was something of a freshness in the air. He felt wretchedly. His mouth was dry and parched and he was in a profuse perspiration. His headache seemed to have grown worse with sleep. The back of his neck ached and so did his eyes.

Martin was sitting on the bank a few feet away. "Well," he said presently, "How do you feel now?"

"Fierce."

Martin laughed. "What we want is a swim," he said, and rising, began to undress, glancing at Benson to see if he acquiesced. A bath in the cool water seemed attractive and the two were soon blowing and splashing in the clear stream. Between dips they sat on the hot stones and splashed in the water with their feet.

Benson had thrown his six-shooter down carelessly beside his clothes. Martin was sitting on a stone a few feet away. As the Shavetail plunged off his rock into a little pool Martin sprang lightly to the bank and picked up the weapon. Benson turned round leisurely to find himself covered.

"Stay where you are," said Martin, quietly.

Benson held on by a big stone and stared at him, stupidly. He felt that something was wrong. Martin's manner was wholly serious.

"Say," he faltered, "quit fooling, that gun's loaded."

"So I ascertained," replied Martin. "Now Mr. Benson, if you will sit quietly on that stone for one moment I will explain our mutual positions. I am not jesting. You are to be my prisoner for some hours to come."

"Who the Devil are you?" cried Benson, divided between bewilderment and exasperation. The other had lowered his weapon but held it ready for use.

"That's a long story, Mr. Benson and we have got to be moving. To answer you briefly, I am a very desperate man and I'm very hard pressed. You will probably know all about me in the course of a week. In the mean time I swear to you that your life won't weigh in the balance if I need it. But I prefer not to do you any harm. You will have to keep absolutely quiet and make no fuss of any sort. If you do as I tell you you won't come to any harm; if you don't——." He paused significantly and waved the revolver. A shiver travelled up and down the Shavetail's spine.

There was no one in sight. Suddenly it occurred to Benson that the man with whom he had to deal might be an escaped lunatic. The thought

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paralyzed his faculties for a moment and then he realized that he was hopelessly in this lunatic's power—if he was indeed a lunatic. It would probably be best to temporize.

"What's the game?" he asked as unconcernedly as he could.

"Simply this. For certain reasons I wish to exchange places with you for a few hours, perhaps days. Never mind my motives. It may be admiration for your character" — as he said this he smiled — "I shall step into your shoes and you into mine. You will learn who you are to be in your new character before long. If you want to get off easy you will play the game. If you don't, there is liable to be trouble. Do you fully understand?"

This settled it. There was no question about it; the man was insane. Just what crazy freak he would attempt next Benson was unable to surmise. The vital point was to humor him.

"I understand" he said at length, his voice trembling perceptibly. "What's the next move?"

"Go back about twenty feet and step into that deep hole."

Benson glanced at the hole in question. It was about five feet deep. He hesitated. "What do you want me to do, — drown myself?"

Martin made a gesture of impatience. "Now look here," he replied roughly, "Do as I tell you, and you won't get hurt."

Benson waded across to the hole and halted, turning once more towards his captor. The water came to his shoulders and the boulders were all at his back. His head formed the bulls-eye of an admirable target. Fortunately this did not occur to him. He was now some thirty feet from Martin and in the middle of the stream. He waited for the other to proceed.

Martin did not keep him waiting long. Laying the revolver down by his side, where it would be within easy reach in case of necessity, he quickly arrayed himself in Benson's clothes. The two men were of about the same size and when the renegade's toilet was completed the uniform might have been made for him. He buckled on the other's six-shooter and put on his hat. "Now come out," he called.

Benson waded toward the bank. "Not here," added Martin, "About ten paces down the stream." Benson followed directions. "Now put on my clothes."

The Shavetail picked up the old shirt and trousers and put them on. The toilet did not take long. Then he squeezed his feet into the water-soaked shoes. "I can't walk in these things!" he said querulously "They're too small."

"You won't have to walk," said Martin curtly. "Put them on." Benson obeyed. "Now about face and put your hands out behind you, wrists together." Martin began to advance. He held the revolver in one hand and in the other a stout cord which he had taken from the bull-cart. Benson turned around and placed his hands as directed. In a moment his wrists were firmly bound.

"Now" said Martin "We're ready to start." They advanced toward the bull cart when Benson discovered that the native, whose existence he had forgotten, had disappeared.

"Looking for your *gugu*?" inquired Martin.

"He is half way to Dagupan by this time. I doubt if he stops running all night. Sit down."

Benson sank to the ground and leaned up against a tree. He felt weak and sick and his head was aching frightfully. His doubts of the other's sanity grew with his fright and exhaustion. He racked his brains for some plan of action which would straighten out the horrible mess into which he had fallen. He had never had to deal with dangerous lunatics, and there was no doubt about this one's being dangerous. The longer this thing went on the greater the chance of his breaking out into a murderous frenzy. Suddenly an idea occurred to him.

"Say Mr.-Mr. B-Benson. Suppose we change clothes again and pretend that I'm Mr. Benson and you're Mr. Martin. Just for a kid, eh?"

The man who went by the name of Martin looked at him curiously. He had been busy with the Bull-cart. At first the question suggested to him that the heat and trouble had turned the young fellow's head. Then the meaning of the remark flashed over him like an inspiration. Benson thought him crazy. This was the one thing needed to complete his plans. It smoothed the way for what was to follow and made the work of the next two hours easier. He returned Benson's gaze.

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"You are feeling warm" he replied, sympathetically. "Take off your hair and your head will be cooler."

He made this speech with absolute gravity. Benson rocked to and fro in misery. The situation was horrible. There was no telling when the lunatic might scalp him in order to make him comfortable. "I'm cooler with my hair on" he gasped "really I am! What shall we do next?"

"You go back to Dagupan and tell them I'm coming. I'll push on to *Balit Balit* and tell them you've left. We'll go together to Manila and find out when we started."

As he finished speaking, Martin drew the revolver and fired across the stream. The bullet struck a stone and glanced off. Benson sat still and swallowed. This was probably the end. The lunatic had begun shooting. Then it occurred to the boy that if Martin could be induced to shoot away all the cartridges, the gravest danger would be passed. He cursed himself for having completely filled his belt. "Say—," he faltered, "I bet you can't put twenty bullets into that tree over there."

His voice was weak and trembling. Martin waved the revolver recklessly. Then he pointed it at Benson. "You didn't shave this morning," he observed "Shall I shoot the whiskers off?"

Benson had not shaved since he left Manila but there was no beard worth mentioning. He felt that the end had come. "Please don't!" he gasped; "I'm raising a b-beard!"

A look of contemptuous pity crossed the renegade's face. He put the revolver back into its holster and glanced at his captive's watch. It was getting late and there was an easier way of controlling the boy than keeping up this lunacy farce. He began to ply him with whiskey, which Benson, being reduced to the last straits of desperation, drank with avidity.

A few minutes later Martin helped him into the cart, where he remained for three horrible hours, his back braced against his trunk and his head racked with each movement of the crazy, lumbering vehicle.

Martin walked beside the caribao and they proceeded on up into the hills over a road which baffled description. Every little while Martin would call a halt and ply his prisoner with whiskey.

There was practically no conversation during the ride. Once or twice Martin would make some crazy remark with a view of substantiating Benson's opinion of his insanity. By eight o'clock that night the Shavetail was hopelessly and soddenly drunk. He was garrulously confusing himself and Martin, and assuring his captor, whom he called by his own name, of his eternal friendship.

"Hish allrigh, ol Boy" he said once. "Don carsh whos th' offisher. We'r old frensh."

A little after eight o'clock they reached the *barrio* where the real Benson's Company was stationed and were halted by a sentry who was on guard on the outskirts of the group of nipa shacks which comprised *Balit Balit*.

In two minutes the men were crowding around the newly arrived officer whose luggage included a prisoner. The first sergeant advanced and saluted the lieutenant.

Martin pointed to the cart and explained: "There is a deserter, sergeant, from the — th. I ran into him down the trail by the river. He was drunk enough to let out who he was. Look out for him, for I hear that he's a very slick article. I think he's half crazy, from the way he talks. All the way up here he kept pretending that he was a missionary and sang hymns. Once he said he was General Otis. You'd better tie him up over night."

A few moments later, when a corporal and two privates were unloading the real Benson and carrying him to the shack used as a guard-house, he unconsciously aided the bogus Benson in his schemes by muttering: "Thought my name wash Benson. Sheems itsh Martin. I'm crazy, Benshons Hell of a fine fellow; but he's crazy too. Wish I knew enough to be, nhic,—officer. God! How my head aches!"

IV.

When the real Benson gradually returned to consciousness the next morning he was aware of an aching in his limbs, a dryness in his throat and a nausea of no uncertain proportions. He opened his eyes with difficulty

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and lay staring up at the nipa roof of the shack in which he was confined. It was a veritable nest of spiders and small green lizards. For some moments he failed to realize his position until, trying to move, he discovered that he was bound hand and foot. He was alone in the little shack, just outside of which he could hear a sentry pacing to and fro with monotonous regularity. There was a door in the shack and looking through this he saw his captor of the day before, drilling the Company, in the open, fifty yards away. A number of mosquitoes buzzed about his head and added to his discomfort, which was intolerable.

He lay stupidly for some moments trying to view his position calmly. He saw that he was in an American army post and was at first inclined to be reassured by the fact. Whatever happened he was safe as far as his life was concerned from any outbreak of lunacy on the part of the man who had so uncompromisingly kidnapped him.

As he pondered over the problem a head was thrust in at the door of the shack. "Say—Come here!" he called. The man, who was the Company cook, climbed up the ladder and into the shack.

He held a meat-can in one hand and a tin cup in the other. He came over to where Benson lay and put the two down on the floor by his side. "Here's your breakfast, damn you," he explained.

Benson stared at him in amazement. About the only thing he had learned about soldiering was to exact the respect due him from his subordinates. "How dare you speak to an officer like that?" he demanded, his voice choking.

The soldier turned and looked at him with a good natured grin. "Officer, did you say? What kind of a damned officer do you think you are? Cut it out, man, and wake up. No crazy bluff will go with this outfit. You brace up and try to be a man. What did you ever want to desert for?"

Benson stared at him. The world was all upside down. "Desert," he muttered, "I'm no deserter. Who do you take me for?"

The soldier gave him a gentle kick with his right foot and then sat down on the doorstep. "Say, Mr. Tarvers or Travers—or whatever your name is—jest hurry up and eat that there ration. I want to take the things back. You can come that officer dodge on some one else when you get tried."

The cook paused and took a chew of tobacco. After a liberal expectoration he lowered his voice to a confidential whisper. "Say! Do you reckon they'll shoot you? They kin, you know, for desartin' like this in time o' war 'an in th' face of the enemy. Oh you skunk!"

Benson writhed. "But I tell you—" he began.

The cook interrupted him with an expression too vile to record. Then he looked the boy over and softened.

"You don't look like much more than a kid." He observed, not unkindly, "Was the officers hard on you or wuz the grub bad?"

"I tell you its all a mistake" groaned Benson. "I am Lieutenant Benson of K Company —th Infantry. Listen to me a minute."

"Chuck it now, lootenant or general or whatever it is," said the other soothingly. "Drink your coffee and eat your breakfast or I'll take it away again."

The very sight of the food made Benson ill. He lost the last spark of self-control which was left to him, "Take it to hell!" he screamed, "and get out of here!"

The other scowled as he rose. "Now look here, you swine" he said. "The boys was kind o' sorry for you, but if you want to play that kind of a game, keep it up and be damned to you." He picked up the meal and started for the door.

"Wait a minute," cried Benson, pleadingly. "I want to see the sergeant of the gnard. Who's in command of this Post?"

The other grunted scornfully. "Sergeant's too busy to bother with you" he retorted. "Captain Howard commands this Company. The only officer with it just now is Lieutenant Benson who arrived last night. Now so long and keep a civil tongue in your head, you pup, or we'll give you the water cure."

With this sally he took his departure and left Benson to his reflections. Bitter as these were and full as his cup seemed he had not yet reached the depths of his humiliation.

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About ten o'clock, the sergeant of the guard appeared upon the scene with another soldier and Benson was unbound and sent forth to work with the other prisoners. At this point he protested wildly and explained, with much faltering, his position. The men of the Company stood about and listened with keen enjoyment. It was seldom that anything happened to vary the monotony at *Balit Balit*.

The sergeant was an old soldier of a very practical turn of mind. At first he was taken aback by the very audacity of Benson's claims and then happened exactly what Travis had foreseen. He plied Benson with pointed and well chosen questions, putting him through a veritable examination.

Remarkable as it may appear to the reader unfamiliar with military affairs, Lieutenant Benson, duly commissioned by the President, was unable to answer the most simple questions pertaining to Company drill and administration. When he had demonstrated, to his own chagrin and the delight of the other men, his almost total ignorance, a diversion was created by one of the other prisoners who claimed to be General Miles and demanded an immediate recognition of his rank. This broke up the gathering and by ridicule destroyed Benson's last chance of gaining credence. He was silenced with a kick and set to work cleaning up the camp.

All day long he toiled save for a short rest at noon when he was compelled through sheer physical weakness to eat and drink. As he worked he caught at times a glimpse of the bogus Benson walking briskly about the camp or sitting in his (the real Benson's) shirt sleeves in one of the windows of the shack used by the officers in command of the little post.

The bogus Benson who, as has probably been surmized, was none other than Martin Travis, the deserter, had begun a busy day at an early hour. After drilling the Company in the morning he had returned to his quarters and taken over the whole of the Company fund from the first sergeant. This amounted to something over five hundred dollars. He had also discovered, much to his delight, among the baggage of the man whose personality he had usurped a set of pay-vouchers for the current month fully made out and signed. This, with the Company fund, made a fairly respectable haul and was enough to enable him to get out of the country.

As he sat in the cool of the evening, eating his supper in the little room which had been occupied by his predecessor, he made up his mind that it would not do to linger too long. Exposure would be sure to come within a few days. In fact, some officer might ride into the Post at any time and if this were the case it would be difficult to keep up the imposture. There was no more to be gained by waiting, unless—suddenly an idea occurred to him and he smiled grimly. It was nothing to him if Benson was tried for duplicating his pay accounts, and small as the amount was, it would help to swell the total. He called the corporal of the guard.

"Go and get that crazy deserter. I want to speak to him."

A few minutes later the real Benson stood before him. "You can wait outside, corporal" said the bogus one, laying the revolver beside him on the table.

The corporal hesitated. "Excuse me, lieutenant, but he might be dangerous. The cook tells me he's clean nutty and he certainly talks like it."

"It's all right corporal. I can handle him. Sit down boy," he added when they were alone.

Twelve hours of bullying and abuse had left the Shavetail utterly spiritless. He sank upon the seat indicated. The renegade looked at him curiously. The twelve hours had wrought a change beyond belief in the boy's manner and looks.

It may be true that the clothes do not make the man, but it is certainly a fact that the uniform makes the soldier in some instances. All the chipper and all the military had vanished and in their place the Shavetail presented a pitiable spectacle. His clothes were dirty and ragged, his eyes were red and he had the look of a hunted animal.

"Your troubles are nearly over, young one," began the renegade. Benson did not reply for a moment. Then he snarled savagely: "You'll pay for this some day and so will the men of this company. Who are you? That deserter Travis, you've been passing me off for, I suppose?"

"Your suppositions are superfluous," replied the other coolly. "You'll take it out of the boys one of these days when you come into your own again? God! what a shame for a kid like you to have a commission!"

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"Perhaps you think you ought to have one—you scoundrel."

"Hold on!" said Travis quietly. "I can make it even more uncomfortable for you than I have, if I feel like it. You'd better play the game for the present."

Benson wilted under the determination of the other's tone. This man had him in his power. All of the men in the little Post thought him a half crazy imposter and it would be an easy matter for this renegade to make his life altogether unbearable. He shuddered at the recollection of the day he had just struggled through. It seemed that his impersonator had all the cards and that resistance was useless.

"What do you want of me?" he asked, sullenly.

Travis rose and stood by the table. "Here are two blank pay vouchers. Fill them out for your pay for this month and sign them. I guess you know how to do that, if you don't know anything else about the army."

"I've already made out my vouchers" replied Benson.

"Yes; I know. These are duplicates."

"Then I won't sign them. You can't make a thief of me, damn you."

Martin Travis smiled. "You are not a thief, my son" he answered "You are a victim of circumstances, and incidentally"—he made the amendment with some pride—of a stronger will than your own. Now sign these vouchers and the court which tries you will consider the circumstances."

"Are you going to steal the money" demanded Benson. "I'll have nothing left to live on!" he added piteously.

"You must make out somehow. You will be over your troubles in a few days and I have a life of them. This is merely a little effort to balance the injustice of fate which has made you and me."

Resistance was out of the question and Benson had passed the resisting stage. He sat down at the table and did as he was told.

"Thanks;" said Travis, folding up the vouchers and putting them in his blouse. "Corporal!"

The corporal reappeared at the door. He had been standing out of ear-shot of the pair.

"Take your prisoner back to the guard-house" said Travis shortly. Without a word Benson followed his guard. He was dog-tired in mind and body and anxious only to stretch himself at length upon the floor of the nipa guard-house and sleep.

V.

During the evening Travis completed his arrangements for flight. He went carefully through Benson's baggage but took very little, for he was traveling light. In the pocket of his blouse he had Benson's pay vouchers, one set of which he would cash at Dagupan, where there was a paymaster, and the other in Manila. Fortunately the bulk of the company fund was in bills. These he secreted about his person together with a few double-eagles. He meant to strike out about midnight and reach Dagupan by six in the morning. He would cut the telegraph wire on the way down. He would be in Manila that night and could remain in hiding until he could smuggle himself on board some ship. If all went well he should be out of Manila before news reached there of his disappearance. The men of the Company could be relied upon to keep the real Benson quiet. The only hitch in the proceedings would be to account for his own disappearance. He trusted to fortune to be on the China Sea before the news reached Manila.

It is to be regretted that we cannot see how his plan worked out. Fate took a hand in the desperate game with results which he was far from foreseeing.

About ten that night, he left his little shack and started to make a round of the sentries. There were four of these and the last was stationed about fifty yards from a small trail, leading down through the *bosque* in the direction of the coast. This trail had apparently been little used and when a search was made for him it would not be included.

Travis completed the round, lingering to converse for a moment with the last of the sentries and then on his way back to his quarters he turned aside and started down the trail.

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It was typical of the Luzon jungle,—thick and difficult. His face was scratched by heavy briars and his feet tripped by long, dark, snaky vines which stretched across the path. It had begun to rain a little and the path was slippery with black mud. The gloom was oppressive and on every side could be heard the sounds of the animal life of the *bosque*. Tree lizards called to each other and bats flew in and out wherever there was an open space. To Travis' joy, the trail led steadily downward.

Deep down in the heart of some men there is a strong affinity with nature's wildest moods. There are some who are no more fit for the life of civilization and the toil of human cities than one of the creatures of the *bosque* which called from every side. Travis knew the call and responded. His spirits rose now that the most difficult part of his adventure lay before him.

When he had been away from the camp clearing for about twenty minutes he caught his foot in one of the trailing vines and fell forward, heavily, on his face. He struck on a small stone and lay half stunned, his head aching with the force of the blow.

As he recovered himself gradually he heard, or thought he heard, the croaking of the tree lizards, but what finally penetrated his dazed brain was a new sound, different from the harmless denizens of the jungle—the sound of human voices. He raised himself on one elbow and peered into the thick brush to the right of the trail—the direction from which he came. About twenty feet away he caught the glow of a cigarette.

A conversation was being carried on in Spanish and Tagalog. He knew the former language and a smattering of the latter. The first few sentences convinced him that he had run upon a party of *insurrectos* and he lay motionless, listening. In a few minutes he had gathered that this was part of a force of three hundred men, of whom half were on the upper side of the camp approaching it from the east. Their objective point was camp *Balit* and the hour of the attack was fixed for shortly after midnight.

Travis lay quiet while the detachment, which he gaged at something over a hundred men, passed on up another trail and were lost to hearing. As fate had willed it, he had fallen and lain half unconscious at the one point where the two trails all but converged. When the *insurrectos* had been gone some little time he sat upright and, striking a match, looked at the Shavetail's watch. It was eleven o'clock. In an hour the camp he had just left would be attacked by an overwhelming force—three hundred men against forty odd. They would be surprised—unless he went back to warn them—and surprise might mean annihilation.

In front of him the trail led downward to the river and beyond that to the line of the railroad and the sea. Travis was a criminal and the first thought which came to him was that this gave him a greater chance than ever to escape and jump the country. If the camp were attacked and a fight resulted he would be counted among the missing and it would be weeks before the deception he had practiced would be known. By that time he would be beyond the seas and the world was big and he was young.

No man is wholly good or wholly bad. Whatever the past of Martin Travis had been, it had probably contained very little to his credit. Now that he has gone to his final account it is not unlikely that the Highest Court of All will give him due allowance for the battle which he fought as he sat there, his head aching and his soul distressed. Finally he gathered himself together and crept noiselessly back toward the camp.

VI.

Meanwhile, the real Lieutenant Benson had stretched himself upon the floor of the nipa guard house and fallen into a troubled sleep. Had he but known it, the work which he had done that day was the sum total of the service which he was destined to render to his country. It is better to clean a camp than wear shoulder-straps, if you bear no heavier burden than the weight of the straps themselves. He had returned to the guard-shack in a state of collapse. His interview with Travis, which had resulted in his unwilling duplication of his pay accounts, had been the final straw.

But, distressing as his present plight was, it was insignificant compared with the thought of the future ridicule to which it would subject him. The story would be told for years and he would go through his career marked as the officer who had been kidnapped and brow-beaten by a common soldier.

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His sleep was the sort which instead of bringing rest from the troubles of the day makes them worse by jumbling them together in a horrid mess. He struggled for several hours with a nightmare in which he spent what seemed to be years as one of a chain-gang, digging holes in the ground and filling them up again. Travis figured in his dreams as an ever present evil spirit who smoked cigarettes and compelled him to commit crimes.

About twelve o'clock a soldier came into the shack and awakened him with a kick. Benson sat up with an exclamation of pain and anger. The soldier clapped a big, wet hand over his mouth. "Shut up" he whispered, with an oath, "There's going to be a scrap. Lieutenant's orders is for all the prisoners to be armed and fall in. Here's a rifle and belt. Move lively now and not a sound on your life! Here; you others."

The two others were prisoners who were doing a short time as camp cleaners in penance for trying to break each other's heads over a game of poker. They were on friendly terms with the other men of the Company and had the respect of their comrades. Benson had spoken to one of them during the day and been spat upon in reply. They arose with alacidity and buckled on their cartridge belts. They scented a fight in the black, wet atmosphere and the low sound of preparations going on outside. They conversed in whispers after begging a chew of tobacco from the sergeant who sat in the door, filling his magazine.

"Here's our chance" said one, a fresh faced boy of about Benson's age. "To be forgive for our little rumpus."

"Hope so" replied the other. "I've four previous convictions already and if they get me this time I'll be bobtailed."

"Thank God you wont get shot" I say, "like that son of a — in the corner there."

Benson was fumbling with his cartridge belt. He swallowed the insult with a dull sense of injury and rage. He had been crushed by abuse and indignities all day.

"You're to be given a chance to redeem yourself, you bastard;" explained another soldier. "Now if you can only manage to get killed you'll never have to be tried. Consider your family."

The spirit of murder lurks in every weak character. The thought crossed Benson's mind that he would rather shoot these men than Filippinos, provided he could do it secretly, under cover of the darkness.

What remains of this story is soon told. When the attacking force swarmed into the clearing, they encountered, not as they had expected, a few careless sentinels, and forty sleeping men, but a resolute and determined band which poured into their midst as they came on a most wholesome and effective fire. There was a scattering of white shirts, a rally and another futile charge. Then the American force broke up, and spent ten minutes chasing, killing and generally disciplining their antagonists.

The man known as Martin Travis conducted the defense with skill and daring. Just toward the end of the second repulse he was shot through the head and went to his Creator with his sins unconfessed and his revolver half empty.

During the short ten minutes Ira Benson met the first real situation of his life and fell down before it. Together with a sergeant and several others, he had been stationed near the entrance to the very trail down which two hours before Travis had started to escape. When the first assault was made some twenty of the enemy came swarming out of the jungle at this point and in the quick, mortal struggle which ensued the two other prisoners had fallen.

Under different circumstances it is not unlikely that Ira Benson might have stood his ground like a man, when he saw two natives engage the sergeant, and three others with uplifted bolos, rushing upon himself. It may have been the demoralizing influence of the last twenty-four hours or it may have been inherent cowardice after all. Whatever the explanation may be, he dropped his rifle with what remained of his manhood and fled wildly down the trail.

It took me a long while to learn from Benson the sequence of events. He was far gone when I knew him and it was not until the week before his death that he told me how he had wandered for days about the country,

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hiding whenever he saw a human being and living on what he could pick up during the night. He told me that he killed a dog with his hands and lived for two days on its flesh. Finally he made his way to the coast and escaped on a tramp steamer which had put into port for water.

When I asked him why he had not established his identity and told his story, he replied that he had seen a Manila newspaper giving a long account of how he had met his end fighting for his country and dying like a hero at the head of his men. He knew that was the report which had gone home to his people and he felt that he would not be likely to better it if he came into his own again.

Which reasoning, in view of subsequent events, was unquestionably sound.



THE CHARITY OF CARTER.

THERE are as many ways of taking a rejection at a woman's hands as there are of taking cold. Some men have taken to suicide; some to drink and a great many to another woman. A very few take to revenge. Carter was one of the latter and for downright meanness and contemptibility I never knew the equal of his conduct in a certain matter. I was not in his confidence at the time but I learned all the facts afterwards.

Carter and I had been trying to spend a rainy Summer in Japan. I say "trying" for it required considerable effort although we at length accomplished it. It was towards the middle of August that this incident occurred.

Carter was a millionaire. He showed this chiefly in the character of the presents which he bought to take home to his sisters, little sets of *satsuma* buttons or pieces of cut-velvet, costing from ten to fifteen *yen*. To his mere friends he took silver pencils or sleeve-links costing *one yen, eighty*. He bought handsome enough things, for himself.

I don't know why we stayed together as long as we did. The only explanation I can think of is, that it was, as I have said, a rainy Summer in Japan. When the rain settles down on that country and there is nothing but the click of billiard balls in a hotel bar-room to be heard and nothing but meals to look forward to, a man holds on to a chance acquaintance like grim death. When we met at Yokohama we joined forces. We left the coast after the first week; partly to see the country but chiefly because we had made up our minds to Summer in Japan and it was therefore not wise to stay in a coast town, where there are ships which go to America and Europe every week. This is a point worth remembering for those who want to stay in the East until its grip is fastened. Keep away from the coast the first few months. After that it doesn't matter so much. Nothing does.

I have mentioned Carter's meanness because it makes his subsequent actions appear in a stronger light. He must have been deeply interested to spend four hundred dollars on the gratification of personal malice. But, as I said before, when it came to something for himself, Carter could spend money.

One particularly nasty day in July we reached Nagoya and after tiffin adjourned to the bar and billiard room. As we entered there was a tall man, of rather florid appearance, engaged in knocking billiard-balls about the table. He was not playing with any one, although at times one of the third-rate *gheisha*'s, who are to be found in the bar-rooms of Japanese-managed hotels "altogether in the foreign style," would take a cue for a game or two. Between games he played against himself. After a time we learned that this was his occupation for ten hours a day.

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We ordered whiskey and Tansan and asked the stranger to join us. There is a sociability which is born, not of kindness, but of desperation. This is what leads strangers in the East to drink with each other. He took a queer looking drink out of a liqueur-glass. It looked and smelt like the sort of stuff which gives out when your automobile runs down ten miles from the nearest town.

The man was not inclined to be sociable the first day. He returned to his solitary billiards but later he invited us to go to a tea house with him that evening and, although tea houses were an old story, we had grown weary of inspecting the cut-velvet monstrosities on the walls of the reading room and accepted. We waited for him in the billiard room until eleven o'clock when he returned from the trip and told us that he had had a "ripping" time. We turned in in disgust.

The next day it poured rain. Carter was cross and disagreeable. He spent the morning trying to ascertain how much he could get taken off his hotel bill if he stayed a month. Liquor only made him sarcastic, although he was undeniably clever.

Finally I grew tired of his bad temper and asked what was the matter. He softened somewhat and told me that he had a letter that morning which had exasperated him. It seems that he had once been in love with a girl. She jilted him, as he put it, and it had soured him. I wondered what Carter had been like before the souring process had set in. From what I could gather the jilting had consisted in refusing Carter when he proposed. He was a man of such unmitigated conceit that I suppose he had never anticipated anything but an acceptance.

The letter was a very nice one, much better than Carter deserved, announcing the girl's engagement to another man, who, it happened, was a business acquaintance of Carter's. The girl's name was Harding. I told Carter that I could match his experience with several like it and that it gave him no real cause to think that he was aggrieved. Then he went off and sulked for the rest of the afternoon.

That evening, our friend of the billiard-balls suddenly woke up. We were sipping our whiskey in the bar room, when he laid down his cue and came over to our table.

"Say, you fellows. Have a drink!" We invited him to join us. "What are you doing in this cursed hole? I never saw any one stay two days before. Haven't you got the money to get out? I haven't."

Carter grew suddenly reserved. If you can use a physical verb to denote a mental attitude, he *shied*. I murmured my sympathy. The man tossed off his automobile drink and then burst into a perfect string of talk. I have never heard anything like it. We sat and listened to him in amazement. I will try to set down a fractional part of his remarks which would last for ten minutes and end without a break.

"God!" he began, "What a hole this is. Cursed; I call it. I've been here ten months. Haven't had enough money at any one time to get a ticket with. I left home ten years ago. Been at it ever since. Been through India and every other damned country. Used to like it, but if I could get home I'd never leave again for the rest of my life. Ever been in Spain? God-forsaken big country with no people in it. Japan isn't bad, but I knew it all before I came here. Think of it! Ten months right here in Nagoya. Nothing to do all day but play billiards. Are you business men? People who travel for pleasure are clean mad, I call it. What's the use. One temple just like another; one whiskey just like another; one Jap just like another. India isn't bad - they do you well in India -."

He paused while the boy brought another of his little drinks. The man interested me. He seemed in some things to have arrived at conclusions which I had been working toward during the entire summer. Surface travellers are the most despondent people on earth and get the least out of life. Those who go below the surface, don't need to travel. They can get more out of a New Hampshire town than your surface traveller can out of the whole wide world.

"Awfully glad you men have come. I never talk to any one the first day. Can't stand it: they always go away the second and that gives me the blues. Can't go with 'em you know. One chap stayed here a month—in June—but he died—D. T.'s—just about the first of July. Poor chap; didn't drink much that I could see. Every time I asked him, said he'd had one. Took 'em in his room—three bottles a day. I stuck by him. Horrible job

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though. Gives me the nerves to think about it. I try not to. Queer part was he had money. Didn't have to stay here. Had a letter of credit. I saw it. Day before he died he offered me money. Knew I was stuck here. Of course I couldn't take his money."

Carter showed signs of thawing out. His relief manifested itself by his signing the chit which the boy brought.

"Are you expecting funds?" I asked.

"Every steamer. It isn't that my people don't send regularly enough, but they keep just a month behind—so when the money comes I've just enough to settle up my bills and not enough to get away on. I'm going to try to work on to Yokohama some day. That's a step nearer home, anyhow. This place is cheaper, though. If I ever get back to Chicago. I'll never leave again; you can bet on it. Ten years—Oh!

"Why don't you get to work and earn enough money to go home on?" inquired Carter.

"Not so easy for a white man to make money in a yellow man's country. Besides, I wasn't brought up to book keeping and the sort of thing that's wanted out here. I'm something of a scientist and there's no room for a scientist here. The Japs know it all themselves now, and they've no further use for a white man. Damned ungrateful, I call it. Where would they be now, if it hadn't been for Western civilization, I'd like to know?

"I've tried to interest people in Tokio, wealthy people, Japs, in my scheme, but they wouldn't touch it. Laughed at me. Laughed like anything and then had me shown out all bowing to the ground like automats. Lord! How their everlasting politeness gets on your nerves!"

He continued to sip his drink between bursts of conversation. The more he talked the more friendly he grew. Finally he took out his card-case and gave us each a card. We returned the courtesy and I looked at the card which he had given me. "Mr. Albert Harding, Chicago." I happened to glance at Carter and his face was a study.

"Are you any relation to Miss Ethel Harding?" he asked.

"Lord yes. She's my sister. Haven't seen her for ten years. Kid when I left. Do you know her?"

Carter responded in the affirmative and Harding wandered on, airing his grievances and abusing Japan.

"Can't even dine in the country. Table seem good when you first get here but its always just the same. I've eaten all the chickens in Nagoya except those that keep me awake nights, crowing in the yard. Thought it was awfully jolly when I first came. Used to like to ride in the 'rickishas; now they give me a headache."

He only needed to be guided to a subject to hold forth by the hour. So I asked him what he thought of the progress of the country and whether he was interested in the commercial life of modern Japan.

"Interest? Progress? Not a bit of it! Nothing to learn here. Just like it is at home only it takes twice as long to do it. They gulp down an industry in a month and then dawdle along over it ever after. I've been through their factories—doing lots of things by hand today that we do by machinery. When I ask them, they say the labor's so cheap it doesn't matter. Chemistry's my particular specialty. I've tried to go through their laboratories. Nothing in it. I can't talk the lingo. Learn it? not much, I don't want to learn it. If I did, I'd lose hope of ever getting away. I *will* go some day and then when I get somebody interested in my scheme."

He broke off and fell into a moody silence, suddenly, puffing at his cigarette. Carter had been sitting in a brown study. "What is your scheme?" he asked.

Hardings face suddenly assumed the look of the man who is not right. He glanced cautiously around and then at us. "Come up to my room." He said abruptly.

We followed him to his room which was at the top of the hotel. He made us comfortable and ordered drinks. There was nothing unusual about the room except that everything was packed. It had less evidence of life than is usual when a man lives in a place ten days, and he had lived here ten months. He kept everything packed, doubtless with the idea of keeping up the delusion of going away.

The evening was warm and oppressively damp. We took off our coats and when the boy had brought the drinks we made ourselves comfortable.

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There was a photograph of a pretty, sadfaced girl on the bureau and as we listened I noticed that Carter's glance frequently strayed in that direction.

As soon as we were alone, Harding proceeded to unfold his scheme. I am not myself a scientist and doubtless he used many terms which I can not recall, as they were unfamiliar. I will set it down as nearly as possible as it came from his lips.

"Are either of you gentlemen chemists? No? Then I will explain my idea as simply as possible. You are both familiar with the simple processes of photography? The underlying principle of my great discovery is the same as that which you put into operation with your cameras, every time you expose a sensitised plate to the light. What happens? The plate, being sensitised, receives an exact picture of what was before it at the time of the exposure. This is subsequently brought out by the use of certain chemicals.

"Having demonstrated that a certain substance—such as glass,—can be so prepared as to receive and retain an impression of this character, it follows that any other substance may perform the same function. It is, for instance, possible to make a photograph on wood or metal. If you can take a photograph on glass, metal or wood, it is possible to take one on any substance from a rainbow to a rock."

At this stage of the demonstration I let my cigar go out and waited for what was to come next. Carter asked with a sneer. "Are you intending to manufacture photographs on rainbows? Doubt if you find a market."

I think Harding was too absorbed in what he was saying to notice the interruption. I kicked Carter under the table as a signal for him to keep quiet and the other continued.

"Now; if it is possible to take photographs on any subject, is it not equally true that such photographs are being taken, not by human hands, but by the simple act of nature, at every instant of the day? Have not such photographs been in the process of making since the world began? Is there not hidden away in every rock and on the wall of every room in the world photographs of every scene which has passed before that object since time began? Scientists have held for years that this is the case. But it remained for me to discover the secret process by which to bring out these photographs and preserve them. I possess a formula which if properly followed will enable us to go into any Egyptian Temple and take from the walls a magnificent picture of the worship of the Ptolemies, which will show on the walls of the Louvre, Charles the Ninth in the act of ordering the massacre of the Huguenots, and give us from every stone in the Great Wall of China a vivid portrait of the armies of the invading Mongolian hordes.

"With this secret nothing can be concealed from me. On the wall of every room in the world is a picture of everything which ever occurred in that room. Think of the boon I shall bring to humanity. Crime will cease.

"From the substance nearest to the criminal I shall take his picture and that of his victim."

He was speaking solemnly now and was flushed with his theme. The look I spoke of—the look of the Insane—was fixed on his face. So this was the secret of his exile.

When he fell silent Carter was the first to speak. "You say, Mr. Harding, that you have discovered the necessary developer for bringing out these pictures—what is it?"

"That," replied Harding, "is my secret and the secret which will make me rich and yet, there is no reason why I should not tell you, for I doubt if you would be able to conduct the experiments, and if you give me your word—"

We both hastily pledged ourselves to make no use of his secret or to divulge it, whereupon he got up and going to the door opened it suddenly and peered down the hall. There were no evesdroppers so he locked the door and coming to where we sat bent and whispered—

"Vinegar!"

There were some things to admire about Carter—there are about every man, I suppose, if we hunt for them long enough and one of them was, that he never moved a muscle on this occasion. Harding's back was toward me and with a strong effort I controlled my desire to laugh.

"But if all you require is just common vinegar, what stands in the way of your demonstrating your success?"

"My family stand in the way. It is not *common* vinegar, but vinegar

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which has ripened and matured in the cask for four hundred years. As you are not chemists I cannot explain the reason for this, but that with certain other component parts, is the developer which I know will bring out all these hidden pictures and make the world rich and me famous.

"Such vinegar, as you can imagine, is hard to get. I searched for two years and finally I met a gentleman in Kansas City who had just what I wanted. The vinegar had been with Columbus on his first voyage and the cask had never been opened until it came into the possession of this gentleman. He offered it to me for five thousand dollars. I asked my family for the money—."

"What did they say?" I asked.

"They refused. They had the cheek to send me to a doctor who examined me as to my sanity! I didn't mind that, for every discoverer has had to have the same experience, but I took it jolly hard. I tell you, when they reminded me that I had two uncles who were off the hooks. One had died in an asylum,—as if that was my fault! I told the doctor all about my discovery and he agreed with me. Said he thought it entirely feasible, but said that I had worked so hard that I'd better postpone my experiments for a few years and travel for my health. He was a scientific man himself, he said, and knew how hard it was to give up, right at the end of a great work. but as I evidently had one of the finest scientific minds of the century, it would be a shame for me to break down and have to chuck it in my youth. So they sent me abroad and damn it they've kept me away ten years!

He ended with a half sob. I was moved with pity for him for he seemed sane on other subjects.

"When did you first conceive this idea?" inquired Carter.

"Just at the end of my senior year in college. I had taken all the honors in science up to that time. Swept everything before me. I ought to have! I used to work twenty hours a day. Never needed more than four hours sleep. I sleep twelve now and never seem to get enough. But, as I was saying, just before graduation, I was working over books one night when this whole diea came to me. It was like being lifted up to Heaven. I felt myself above the world actually! I looked down on every one beneath me. I've never known such joy since. And my family, mind you, thought it was strange because I wandered off and stayed in the woods til after graduation. I was away three weeks, they had the police after me—think of the fools! Then they sent me to a private hotel near Rochester for a few weeks and ween I was all rested up packed me off for my health. I don't want health; what's the use? Here I'm cooped up in this God-for-saken Nagoya for ten months. I'd rather be unhealthy and be at home.

"Do you really except to go home?" I asked

"Expect it? Certainly. I've been expecting it for some years now, expecting it every mail. I'd better go pretty soon—by-and-bye I won't care. Sometimes I think, what's the use? I don't care personally about the pictures. They may never do *me* any good. But its science I love—Think of it!"

We left him about ten o'clock and went for a stroll for the rain had stopped. Our walk took us through the dimly lighted streets of the town—streets where every other shop was a toy shop and the babies outnumbered all the other animals, including men, women and dogs, ten to one. Neither of us had much to say. Carter walked so rapidly that it was an effort to me to keep up with him. I knew that he was thinking of the poor devil at the hotel who had gone back to his billiard-balls.

"Rum chap, that." I observed, by way of drawing Carter out. He was chewing the end of his cigar as though he nourished a grudge against it.

"Do you know," he said. "I came near marrying that man's sister. Gad; what an escape! Did you hear what he said about the two uncles?"

I made no remark for I was wondering how near he thought he had come to marrying the sad-faced girl whose photograph I had seen in Harding's room. Somehow the experience we had just had seemed to me to be pleasing to Carter but when he next spoke I made up my mind that I had done him an injustice.

"Do you know I've a great mind to send that young fellow home—where he belongs. Its a charity."

During my acquaintance with Carter, I had never heard of his doing anything charitable. Once I saw him kick a begger at the gate of a temple in Tokyo. But we can't always judge a man on five week's acquaintance.

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"Would it really be a kindness?" I asked.

"Why not?" he demanded, abruptly. "He's no business kicking around out here. Who's to take care of him if he gets sick, or dies? Let's go back. I'm going to bed."

Carter and I parted company the next day as I had some friends arriving in Yokohama whom I wanted to see. Ten days later, I went off to one of the ships in the harbor. She was just sailing for home and I wanted to send some letters which I had written too late for the post. Among the homeward bound passengers I found Harding. He came dancing up to me just as the last of the allashore people were going over the side to the launch.

"I'm off for home!" he shouted wringing my hand. "That man Carter's a regular brick! After you left, he loaned me the money to go home on—four hundred dollars; and what's more—" he lowered his voice to a whisper—"He's given me a letter to a man who will furnish the funds to conduct my experiments. Its come at last after all these years! Good-bye old man—."

"Hold on a minute" I cried, for my brain was confused "Who is the letter to?"

He drew it from his pocket and held it out for me to read the address. "It was James Montrose, St. Louis."

"All ashore, Sir;" said the quartermaster. "Step lively please." I dropped mechanically into the launch just as the ship got well under way. I saw her drawahead and turn down the bay of Yeddo on her long voyage across the Pacific. The last face I could discern on deck was that of Harding who was leaning over the rail, waving his hat and wearing on his face the expression of the exile going home. Then it all came to me with a rush. Carter's generosity was explained. James Montrose, of St. Louis, was the man Ethel Harding was to marry.

* * *

The end of the story is soon told though I did not learn it for many months after I had returned home. I might never have done so had it not been for an accident which is not pertinent to this story.

James Montrose was a wealthy manufacturer, who had spent all his early years in amassing a fortune. He was well on toward fifty at the time of his engagement to Ethel Harding. He had never married in his youth, for he was too busy making money and when middle life came he wanted some one to leave it to. He became engaged to the girl that he might have a son to carry on the work he had begun and fill the place he had made. He selected her as being apparently admirably adapted for the cheerful fulfilment of his ambitions.

When Harding presented the letter which Carter had given him, Mr. Montrose listened attentively to the project which the poor fellow expounded at great length. I believe the interview interested Montrose so much that he took the matter under consideration for some time with the result that the engagement was broken. Ethel went to Europe and the last I heard is still unmarried.

The Harding we met in Nagoya was sent back to the private hotel near Rochester, where, I believe, he is yet. I once saw the letter which Carter had given him with the four hundred dollars. It was as follows.

Nagoya, Japan, August 18, 189—.

My dear Mr. Montrose:

This will be handed to you by Mr. Albert Harding of my city, who has a project to which I would commend your careful consideration. If it interests you, I would further suggest that Mr. Harding has, or has had, two uncles of similar scientific bent. An investigation of their theories might aid you if you think of profiting by his unique studies and conclusions.

Very truly yours,
H. W. CARTER.

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EVERY one who knows Mrs. Harrison likes to hear this story. She has many enemies in many regiments over which she has ruled with a rod of iron. Her special mission in life, which is the guidance of the affairs of others, has earned her more enmity than the woman, who is really not bad at heart, deserves. The truth is, people dislike her because she usually hits the nail on the head, to use an apt expression. Her keen eyes can go right through a couple and at the first glance pronounce their relations as a flirtation or as something more serious.

The incident which gave Mrs. Harrison her set-back and shattered her confidence in her own discernment happened when we were fellow-passengers on the "Bucolic" coming out to Manila. There was a girl on board, a Miss Hood; young enough and pretty enough to attract Mrs. Harrison's keen eye and bring her to me with all sorts of surmises. During the voyage the girl was monopolised by a man named Tyler and the monopolising was more pronounced than is usually the case on Pacific liners. Early in the voyage the story had gained footing that she was going out to be married to an army officer. This is how the rumor started.

I had just finished tiffin one day and come on deck for a lazy hour with my cigar. As I was idling about the door of the smoking room a man came up and joined me. I had noticed him several times since sailing but heretofore had always managed to escape. He was an American school teacher bound for the Philippines.

His cuffs were frayed, for which the government may have been responsible, and dirty, for which he must have been himself to blame. He was smoking one of those cigars which remind you by their smell that nicotine is a part of tobacco and is an evil and noxious thing. His hands were fat and podgy and he was given to rings—or perhaps they had been given to him, for I cannot imagine a man's buying such things for himself. His red necktie was tied at the back with an elastic and rode up over his collar into his fat, furry, reddish brown neck. All these things were borne in upon me as he approached and greeted me with that easy sociability with which a certain class of Americans are wont to assert, not that they are as good as you are, but that you are no better than them.

"Fine day," he observed. "Got a light?" The thing he was smoking had burned raggedly down at the edge. I handed him my matches and when he had secured his light he lolled against the rail at my side. "First trip in these parts?"

I wondered if the Almighty took enough interest in the opinions of His creatures to resent hearing a piece of handiwork like the Pacific Ocean described by the term "parts." "No" I answered and then, realizing the futility of reserve, I added, "I travel regularly."

"Do you? I'm a teacher, goin' to Manila. It ain't exactly in my line, learnin' little brown kids things I ain't altogether familiar with myself. But it happened to be the only thing doin' just now. It's been a fine voyage. This is an elegant vessel."

"I'm glad you've enjoyed it."

"I have that. Ain't so sure how it'll be after I get there, but if I don't like it I won't stay. You see that lady?" pointing to a refined, little woman in mourning. "She's a widow lady. She's a teacher too. Delicate health I'm told. Had money and lost it. Her name's Thompson. Mrs. Thompson. Mine's Jenkins, Thaddeus Jenkins," and he produced a soiled card.

"I am happy to meet you, Mr. Jenkins" I answered, my eyes following the retreating figure of Mrs. Thompson as she walked down the deck. I wondered what fate was about when she took these two people from different worlds and shipped them both to the Philippines to carry on a task for which neither was fitted. Perhaps she was trying to be humorous at the expense of the islands, but there was a tragedy in part of it.

Then Miss Hood, who was the object of Mrs. Harrison's interest came on deck and nodded brightly to me as she walked away accompanied by Tyler, the man to whom Mrs. Harrison affirmed she "ought to be engaged, if she wasn't."

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"Do you know that young lady?" inquired Mr. Jenkins. "I ain't acquainted with her yet. She's goin' out to Manila to be married to an officer. Some fellows is lucky. I never was much of a ladies man myself. Guess I could be if I wanted to."

"How on earth," I exclaimed, "did you get all your information?"

Mr. Jenkins closed one eye and nodded at me with a playfulness which suggested a livery stable. "I come aboard early and got acquainted with the lady whose business it is to take care of the female passengers when they're sea sick."

"You mean the stewardess?"

"That's her title. Fine woman too."

He threw away the stump of his cigar and produced two others from somewhere inside his clothes. He wore no waistcoat and I had a suspicion that he carried them in a pocket in his trousers. I explained that I had smoked enough and excused myself on the plea that I had to make a fourth at bridge.

That was how the story of Miss Hood's engagement started, for, in my innocence, I told Mrs. Harrison and she immediately established a system of espionage in the interest of the unknown fiance in Manila, which would have done credit to Pinkerton's Detective Agency.

The girl continued to outrage Mrs. Harrison's sense of the proprieties until things reach a climax one night and the latter was defeated in open ground. People say it has softened her. I hope so.

We were near our journey's end and had left Nagasaki behind us the evening before in a great bank of gold and mackerel clouds.

The day had opened wet and with a high, driving wind. One of those mornings when the sea seems like an hysterical woman. There had been no comfort anywhere on the ship. The decks had been slippery and the deck chairs wet. Within, it might have been warm and cozy by contrast had we been farther north, but that morning we had had a glimpse of the wild forbidding coast of Formosa and the air was close and sticky.

The passengers had made themselves as comfortable as possible but every one was in a humor to show how bored he was with every one else. Bridge had palled as an amusement and aside from the poker game in the smoking room it seemed like a different world from the bright, cheery yesterday at Nagasaki.

To those who had been a good deal at sea there was something in the atmosphere which was imperceptible to the others. The first officer had been unusually silent during tiffin and had received a chit in the middle of it, from the captain who had not been seen all day. The chief left the table and did not come to dinner. In the early evening I saw the second steward and one of the engineer officers come into the companion-way and stand in front of the barometer. I joined them and noticed that it had fallen three-quarters of an inch since I had last looked, an hour before.

"Did you ever see one?" asked the engineer officer.

"Not me," replied the steward.

"Well, this'll be a beaut, and no mistake. You'll see something afore morning, Henry. I wish we were in the Pacific. These narrow waters is enough to turn a man grey in September sometimes. I was wrecked once down the channel there," and he jerked his head in the direction of Formosa.

"You don't say?" said the steward, in a voice which indicated that he had thoughts of going back into the hotel business whence he came. I went on deck where I found difficulty in standing against the wind which seemed to be blowing simultaneously from all points of the compass.

If there had been a sunset there was no trace of it remaining in the sickly light which covered the trembling black mass, cowering before the wind and snarling back at it in sputs of white foam. There was no distinct line of demarcation between the sea and the sky except that across the latter some nasty, smoky clouds were racing toward a horizon which only made its presence known when some giant wave stronger for a moment than the wind, broke into a long, white mass of foam against the sky.

I knew that a typhoon was on and it looked as though we were going to run through its center. I made my way around the deck with difficulty and then sought the social hall where a few of the passengers had gathered.

They were fairly representative of the travelers one meets on American steamers in the Pacific. There was a man who claimed to be on a diplo-

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matic mission for the government. He had loaned me pamphlets on "Our Trade with The Orient" and "The United States as a World Power;" pamphlets which I returned to him unread. As I entered, he was laying down the law to the others, who listened to him because the weather had driven them to bay and made them desperate. The delights of the chief engineer's phonograph had been exhausted and they had to do something.

"The progress of the Japanese" he was saying, "is merely an evidence of the future possibilities of every Oriental nation. It is not too optimistic for us to prophesy that in the course of a decade or so, other Orientals will have followed in their footsteps, with the result that our grandchildren may live to see a modernization and amelioration of all Oriental peoples. This is in line with the broad policy of the United States in regard to the people of the Philippine Islands. Shortly before I left Washington I had a long chat with the President and as I said afterwards to Senator Lodge, there is no reason.—"

"There *is* a reason, sir," said a missionary, a severely austere little man, who looked as though he was on intimate terms with the Almighty and the rest of humanity did not move in the same set. "No people can hope to rise to greatness except they put their faith in Christ Jesus."

"My Dear," interrupted the little woman at his side. "The gentleman was speaking of the Filipinos, who are Christians."

"Catholics, Mary, Catholics. The Church of Rome has for more than twelve centuries."

I had learned that a prompt interruption might save unpleasantness. "May I inquire, Doctor," I asked, "What denomination you represent?"

"Yes sir. I belong to the United Workers, of non conformist Christians. My destination is Manila, where I hope to be of some slight service in promoting the spreading of a gospel which I believe will be as new to those benighted people as to any heathen race."

When you come to a man who had taken out a patent on his particular creed and is watching eagle eyed for any infringements there is no more to be said. "I sincerely trust that you will be as successful as you deserve" I said, hastily. "Is this your first voyage to the Orient?"

"Yes sir. It is. To my lasting shame I confess that I have but quite recently felt a call."

"Timothy my love" protested his wife, mildly, "You give the gentleman a false impression. You have been pastor of your flock for fifteen years."

"I am sure, Madam," I said, "that no one could get a false impression of your husband."

"I thank you, sir." Said the missionary. "It is, however, but recently that I have felt the call to leave my little flock and journey into the waste places of the earth and make them fruitful."

"Are the Philippines really such a waste place?" inquired Mrs. Thompson.

The statesman had been squirming in his seat, waiting for an opportunity to absorb the conversation.

"On the contrary, my dear lady, the colonial possessions of the United States are a most fertile and productive archipelago, stretching from the tropics, within a short distance of equatorial regions, almost to the temperate zones, and producing, among others of the world's most essential commodities.—"

"Its a disgusting country" said the Mrs. Harrison flatly.

"Madam," replied the statesman, "I beg to differ with you. Judged perhaps, from the standard of luxurious living and Western cultivation to which I perceive you have been bred; it may be that the Philippines are somewhat of a disappointment. But as an evidence of that larger career upon which we, as a nation, have so recently embarked, permit me to express my humble opinion that "

"Timothy," said the missionary's wife, "Its getting very rough. Do you think the children are going to be sea sick?"

"How many little ones have you?" asked Mrs. Harrison.

"We have eight, but only four with us."

The statesman beamed blandly. "You are a remarkable young woman, madam, to be the mother of eight children."

The little woman flushed and her husband replied.

"Sir, we are but recently married. The little flock to which my wife

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refers are the material evidence of the blessedness which the first Mrs. Hayden and myself enjoyed for twelve long years, before the Good Lord saw fit in His Wisdom to remove her to a sphere of higher usefulness."

"Hump!" said the Mrs. Harrison in an aside to me, "It seems to me that the poor woman did her best to be useful while on earth."

"I am sure we shall continue to have beautiful weather," exclaimed one of the younger passengers, "And no one will have any excuse for being ill. I am a mascot. I always have good luck at sea. Haven't I brought you all good weather so far?"

The Reverend Timothy gazed at her reproachfully. "Surely, young lady," he objected, "you are not superstitious?"

"Yes; I am. Why not? I'm sure all women are, and most men."

"Superstition is the symptom of a sinful soul seeking the Light."

"Timothy!" protested his wife.

He saw that his zeal had carried him too far. "Of course I do not refer to such superstitions as those which incline your sex to seek that protection which it is the happiness of mine to bestow." His manner as he made this amendment was almost gracious and I began to see how it was that two women had married him.

Mrs. Harrison again confided her views to me. "Singular what ideas some men have of protection," she said, and I could see that she was still thinking of the eight children.

As she spoke the ship gave a sudden lurch to starboard, as though struck by a mountainous sea. She heeled over to an angle of forty degrees and the missionary, who had risen to inspect the books in the book-case, slid across the deck into the lap of Mrs. Harrison. Then, before any one knew exactly what had happened, the lights went out and the social-hall was knee deep in water.

"Our sins have overtaken us!" shouted the missionary.

"Speak for yourself," retorted Mrs. Harrison, "and get out of my lap!"

On deck, the sea was washing back with the recoil, carrying steamer chairs and everything in its path. Then came a wrenching noise as some twenty feet of the rail was carried away. Together Thaddius Jenkins and I closed the door of the social-hall. It took a mighty effort and when we had finished we groped our way to a seat and climbed out of reach of the water, which was washing to and fro on the floor. Then the lights went up again.

Out of respect for Mrs. Harrison I will not dwell on the sight which first greeted me. She was standing on the sofa and whatever happened she evidently did not intend to have her skirts wet. The others were huddled in ludicrous postures about the room.

"Ladies, be calm!" cried the statesman.

"We *are* calm!" snapped Mrs. Harrison. "Don't you think it would be a good idea if you got something and bailed out the ship?"

I secured a cuspidor and began bailing. The engines had stopped and we were drifting in the trough of the sea. I knew from the continual grating of the rudder chain that she would not answer her helm.

The remainder of that night is something I am anxious to forget. The others, with the exception of Mrs. Harrison, whose cabin was on deck, managed to get to their staterooms. Just after daybreak we were through the worst of it and the glass began to rise. Then I took Mrs. Harrison in charge and we started down the deck on the leeward side.

I had never seen such a sea. The wind had cowed it as a man might whip a dog. Every time a wave raised its head, the wind lashed the top off and sent it scurrying over the angry, frothy surface, like drift-snow across the crust of a blizzard-swept prairie. The air was full of a fine spray; so fine that in the distance it was like a fog, but when a gust of wind drove it in our faces it burned and left a sore feeling like a wound in which salt has been rubbed.

I have read of lifting women up and carrying them thro places of peril to a haven of safety beyond. My experience with Mrs. Harrison did not fulfill the anticipations with which a taste for fiction had endowed me. There is nothing to cherish about the memory of the twenty minutes which we spent going fifty feet down the deck to the door of her cabin. Finally we accomplished it and then, turning suddenly the corner of the deck house in which was the smoking-room, we came upon a spectacle which, I am

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sure, repaid Mrs. Harrison for the experiences of the night. Miss Hood and Mr. Tyler were clinging together in the shelter of a life boat. She was sobbing in his arms and he was soothing her with the air of a man to whom the consolation of beauty in distress, is a pleasure.

When I left Mrs. Harrison her eyes were blazing, and she was giving no heed to her steamer-trunk which was floating about in six inches of water. "Did you see them?" she exclaimed. "Did you see them? I wonder what will happen now?"

Three days later, I joined Mrs. Harrison as she sat in her victoria listening to the Constabulary band on the Luneta. It was a soft, beautiful evening and all nature seemed to be trying to smile away the idea that there are such things as typhoons. Mrs. Harrison was tremendously excited. "Have you heard the news?" she demanded breathlessly.

"I am sure I soon will," I answered. "What is it?"

"Miss Hood and Mr. Tyler were married yesterday just after we came ashore. I wonder what became of the other man?"

"You might ask," I answered "there are the happy pair, now." I raised my hat as a smart little trap came up to us on the walk. In it were our fellow-passengers looking as most people look for a little while in a lifetime.

"Mrs. Harrison waived her parasol energetically. "How do you do, you charming bride! Mr. Tyler my congratulations."

"Thanks awfully, Mrs. Harrison" said Tyler, flushing. "I've waited five years."

Mrs. Harrison's face was a study. "You don't mean to say—."

The big American policeman took the Tyler's horses by their heads to lead them forward, for others were pressing on behind. Tyler raised his hat as a parting salutation. "Yes," he called "and I don't believe in long engagements either!"

They were out of earshot and Mrs. Harrison turned to me. "Then—?"

"Yes."

"He was the man all along?"

"So it would seem."

"Did *you* know it?" There was a challenge in the question. Fortunately I was able to answer "No."

A wise woman knows when to drop a subject. The band had played its last selection and she indicated the seat at her side. "Come to dinner," she said. "The Colonel will be delighted to see you. He was asking after you today."

Mrs. Harrison's dinner invitations are a command. She does not rank with royalty but she has the best cook in Manila and in Manila a good cook outranks royalty.



COT 26.

AT last I had come under the shadow which lies forever over the Philippines. The insidious little microbe upon which has fallen the responsibility of persuading white men not to live outside a white man's country, had brought me to where I lay, on cot twenty-seven in a ward of the Civil Hospital.

Cot twenty-eight was inclined to be neighborly. He was a reporter on one of the Manila newspapers. His salary, he said, was thirty dollars a week and he drew it at rare intervals when there was any in the office to draw. Sometimes he waited outside and waylaid the collector. If he was successful he would take a leave of absence for several days and there was nothing said about it afterwards. In view of the fact that the office owed him more money than the collector could by any possibility bring in, the morals of the transaction were above reproach, whatever might be said of it as a business proceeding. As a general thing, however, he signed chits. I asked him once how he ever found time to count these chits before payment and he replied that he had long since found it better to weigh them.

He had been everything, that man, from hotel clerk in Panama to private soldier in Alaska. Unlike many of his calling his stories had a note of truth in them and there is no doubt that he had lived his life in a picturesque atmosphere. It is a singular thing, by the way, that it is the men who do the unusual things who do the most exaggerating and prevaricating. It is only in fiction that those who do bold deeds preserve a modest silence on the subject. Men who spend their lives in offices, or around the stove in a village store, rarely tell wondrous tales of their exploits. It is the men who drift from home and never drift back again; to whom the jungles of Borneo or the snows of Alaska are alike, who prefer lying about a tiger hunt in eighty-nine to telling the truth about a lion hunt in ninety-eight.

Cot twenty-six was a smooth-faced boy of twenty-two, young enough to have been the journalist's son. He was a bad case. He had come to the hospital from the Provinces somewhere and had come too late. He, also, had dysentery and was pretty well done for by the time he came under treatment, being brought in on a stretcher. I had a little talk with him that afternoon and soon learned that he was not interested in his own case and that he evidently had no desire to live. I tried to rouse him; tried to interest him in various ways, but without any particular success until I got him to speaking about himself. Then I saw that selfpity was his strongest feeling, and I knew him for a weak character.

He talked freely one night, a few days after his arrival. I was awakened about two o'clock in the morning by stifled sounds issuing from cot twenty-six and when I turned over I found that the boy was crying his heart out.

I soothed him as well as I could all he wanted was a bit of human sympathy, and little by little, then and afterward, I learned his story. It was a weak story but then it must be remembered that his was a weak character and all things in this great world are comparative. There is a moral in it too, for it shows how the heedlessness of one man can destroy the life of another, besides showing that it is bad business to tie yourself up with girls named Cicely, and red and white roses, before you are twenty. If you are a strong man—as strong as the average—it will make you feel like a fool in after years and if you are weaker than the average, it may help the little microbe in his gleesome task of carrying you off.

His name was Harold Dean, and he was a department clerk—one of the lesser wheels in that great and expensive machine known as the Philippines government. He was a retiring and modest wheel—which means that he never progressed so as to attract the notice of any one higher than his department chief. He had come to the Philippines with an object, which was to get a position carrying salary enough to enable him to marry. When he secured this clerkship the salary twelve hundred a year—had seemed like affluence to him and to the girl but they were judging by the standards of a country town of ten thousand souls and they did not know Manila.

After his arrival he did his best to economise, messing with several other clerks in a little house out on the Santa Mesa road, and when his pony died, three days after he had paid for it the two hundred dollars which it had cost him much self-denial to save, he began walking to and fro to his office in the walled city. Finally he succeeded in being transferred to the Provinces where it costs less to live, but where it is also easier to die. Which is why he contracted dysentery and passed through the Civil Hospital on his way to the Great Beyond.

Harold had little to say about his boyhood. Everything seemed to center in what he called his "manhood years," though I should not have said that he had yet attained manhood—which is an estate which comes to some men late and to some, not at all. I was able, however, from little things which he let drop to form a pretty good idea of what his boyhood had been. He had taken prizes at school and had been beloved of his teachers. So I conjured up a picture of a boy who gives promise in childhood and lets it go at that.

The one thing about him which was really big was his love for this girl Cicely. When a middle class girl is named Cicely you may begin to look for ringlets and trouble. Harold found both.

He had begun his worship at an early age and they had become engaged, but he had no employment which would enable him to marry and there was none near at hand. There were lawyers in that town—lawyers who had been practicing for eight years and were making nine hundred dollars a year. His father ran a store of some sort and made a thousand a

year until the insurance lapsed one night and the store burned down in the dawn of a winter's morning. Then Harold realized that other things than his desire to marry urged him forth on the wide world. So, through his congressman, who was a cousin and also a friend, he obtained this clerkship in the Philippines.

He never talked much during the day but during the night, when he could not sleep, he used to pour out all the poor, pathetic, little details of his misery. Toward the end, when he had learned to know me, he would talk for an hour at a time about the girl.

It seemed that the day he went away he had agreed to send her each year on the anniversary of their betrothal, a white rose. This was to be the sign that he was constant and she was to respond in kind. She had insisted that if he ever ceased to care he should send her a red rose instead. "As though I could ever stop loving her" he had exclaimed.

"How long ago was that?" I asked, thinking what a poor little fool he was after all and wondering if the world would be any the better for his getting well.

"Six months now," he said, wearily; "the last one. I sent the rose but nothing ever came since. I've tried to get over it, but somehow I just can't. I dream of her all the time. I wouldn't mind dying if I could see her again and believe in her. I never had much pleasure out of life anyhow. Somehow I've always been crowded by some one. I'm not bright, I guess. There must be some reason. No matter how hard I work there's always some one else who gets things—I never do."

"You want to brace up," I answered. "You're not going to die. There must be some misunderstanding. You're going home to marry the girl. Its probably the fault of the mail. You know the mail has faults out here."

He shook his head weakly. "That can't be. I should have had the rose in February and this is August. I sent word to my cousin to send her the white rose. He did it all right enough. He's been doing it every year since I came out."

"Don't you think there might be some mix up in that rose business?" I asked. "It seems to me a sort of round-about way of doing things. A letter would have been better."

"I couldn't send a letter. So that's how we thought of the roses. It was just as good. I never needed any letter as long as her rose come every year. Out there in the Provinces its all I lived for. I have the three she sent, now."

"Do you mean to say she never wrote to you?"

"She can't write. She's blind."

"You didn't tell me that."

"Didn't I? That's what made me fall in love with her, I guess. She was so pretty and sort of helpless. And besides, I'm so homely I don't guess a girl that could see, would have me."

There was pathetic truth in this, for he *was* homely. One of the freckled, large nosed type, with a weak chin.

"Well" I said lamely "You can straighten it all out when you go home."

"I'm not going home," he answered quietly, and then he went to sleep.

The next day a States mail came in and we were all busy for a while. I saw that the boy in cot 26 had a letter but it was not until I had gone through my own mail that I looked at him. His face was drawn and white.

"Anything wrong?" I asked, I am afraid without much sympathy, for the youth was getting on my nerves. I had seen my share of real trouble and tragedy in those blessed isles and this case did not strike me with any particular force.

"I've a letter from my sister" he said. "*She's* married."

"Who? your sister?"

"No. The girl I was engaged to."

* * *

He died that night about three o'clock and before he died he made me promise that I would find the girl when I returned to America and tell her that he had loved her to the last and freely forgave her for her inconstancy. I tried to dissuade him from his wish but he cried and clung to me with miserable, thin, cold hands and I yielded. Then he turned his face away and died just about as he had lived, without making any fuss or trouble for anyone.

The newspaper man woke up just as they were carrying the body out in the ghastly light of the dawn. "There goes your friend," he muttered drowsily. "Never had any guts. Guess he's as well off. Lord, what a cheerful place this is!" He went to sleep again, but sleep was far from me. I pulled the sheet over the empty bed and under the pillow I found three faded white roses.

Two years afterward I walked down the street of a little country village in Pennsylvania, kicking myself for having been fool enough to accept so delicate a commission as that of telling a married woman that another man had died loving her and forgiving her. But I had promised, and I had waited long enough already.

I found the house at last and rang the bell. After waiting an interminably long time the door was opened by a man in his shirt sleeves, who greeted me civilly enough and inquired whom I wished to see. He was a big, honest faced, hard-handed man of thirty-five and he held in his arms a wriggling, squirming baby. It was the husband.

When he learned that I had a message for his wife, he had the rare delicacy to leave us alone, after he had called her down from upstairs and "made me acquainted" with her. She was a woman who had a certain prettiness which might have shown to better advantage had she been properly dressed. Her hair was blonde with ringlets and she wore a pair of steel rimmed spectacles to disguise the fact that her eyes were fixed and vacant. She sat with her hands folded placidly across her stomach, which, under the circumstances, was the last place she should have put them. All of the good wholesome food which had been cooked in that comfortable house during the last year had left its ghost in the cheap curtains and the horsehair furniture.

"I've a message for you, Mrs. Tompkins, from an old friend who died two years ago, in the Philippines."

She gave a little start and then her face resumed its placid calm. "From—Harold Dean?"

"Yes."

"What is it?"

"He told me just before he died. You see we were in the hospital together, which is how he came to make me his messenger. He said to tell you that he died loving you and pardon me for giving the message just as he sent it—that he forgave you for your inconstancy."

"Her fingers, which were interlaced, began doing things with each other. I looked out of the window into the country street. The snow was falling heavily and there was no sound but the ticking of a clock in the next room, which I judged to be the kitchen. The cage full of stuffed birds on the mantel then drew my attention. Finally she spoke. Her voice was a little querulous.

"I wasn't inconstant. He sent me a red rose. I knew it at once by the difference in the smell and besides, Mother told me it was red. But you don't know about that."

"Yes," I replied. "He told me."

"Did he? You see on account of my being blind we couldn't write."

"It was a mis"—I began and then I checked myself. What was the use? I thought of the big, honest-faced man with the baby. The boy had passed away to nothing by this time in Paco cemetery. I had fulfilled my mission and there was nothing to remain for.

"He'd a lot of nerve," she added, with a touch of asperity, "To be sendin' me a message like that after sendin' me a red rose. Mebbe he missed me when he was dyin, though," she added with a whimper.

"I know that he did," I responded shortly. "I will say good-bye now. I have to catch my train."

The husband urged me warmly to stay to supper. "You've come a long way from them islands," he explained, hospitably. I declined the invitation and waited for an hour in the station until my train came in.

The next week, being in Washington, I made it my business to hunt up the congressman who had been entrusted with the commission of sending the roses. As soon as he learned that I was not looking for anything but information he was very cordial.

"Harold Dean? Oh yes. I remember the boy well: cousin of mine. Always liked him. Got him that job out there. You've just come from the

Philippines? You don't say! Well; now, I guess you aint very sorry to get back, are you? Don't talk Philippines down this way. We're dead sick of 'em."

"I was with your cousin when he died," I said.

"Were you? Poor boy. He was kinder weak, I thought, but I hoped he'd brace up out there. Didn't think this country was any place for him. No use for the weak ones here. No sir. Its hustle like hell and only the strong win out."

"He had a romantic attachment, I judged."

The congressman was a portly gentleman with a hearty voice. He laughed with huge enjoyment. "You bet he did! I've often told the yarn to the boys. He was sweet on little Silly Martin. Cicely her name is, but we always called her Silly. Suited her, too, I guess. She's married now — a man named Thompkins and I guess she got a better lot than poor Harold, with all his damned, pretty foolishness about white roses."

He paused to take breath and resumed. "Well as I was saying—where was I? Oh! yes. He made me his go-between. Wasn't that great! Don't I strike you like the sort to be sendin' roses to girls on anniversaries and helpin' other fellows in their amours? Wouldn't it jar' you!"

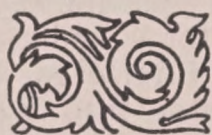
"Harold told me you always sent white roses."

"Yes, sure enough, I did. He specified that kind and told me always to be sure and send a white one."

"And did you, always?"

"Sure! Or no, hold on a minute. Oh! I remember now. The last time,—the year he died, you know, I forgot all about it until the very day and they didn't have any white ones so I had to send an American beauty. Fine one it was too. Cost two dollars, but I was fond of Harold and I didn't mind that. Going? Well, I'm mighty glad to have seen you. Thanks for being kind to the boy. After all, its hard dying away from home like that. Going back there? I wouldn't if I were you. this is the greatest country on God's earth and I just guess we don't need any colonies."

He put on his over-coat and accompanied me to Pennsylvania Avenue, where our ways parted, I going back to my hotel and he to the Capitol where, with his fellows, he was engaged in shaping the destinies of the Philippines, along the lines of the least intelligence.



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SHE was not in the least like an ordinary globe-trotter. I abhor globe-trotters. They go about the world getting impressions. Impressions are the majority's substitute for convictions. I never knew a person with impressions who was not offensive; generally they are noisy.

She had come either by way of the east, across the Pacific, or else from the west, by Suez. I did not know which. I only knew that she could not have been long in Japan—knew it by her clothes which were not Japanese. They suggested other worlds beyond the sea, too expensive for Anglo-Orientals to live in. They suggested—but why continue? If I were to set down half of the things suggested by those dainty, fleecy, shimmery, fascinating things I should never get on with my story. And it was not her clothes which attracted me to her. It was her mind.

A man never worries about a woman's mind unless it is concealed behind a beautiful face. Her's was. I got behind the curtain and was not disappointed. But I never ceased to prefer the curtain. This is heresy and unsound reasoning, but it's true.

We had been friends for some time. If she was a globe-trotter she had the decency to descend to a walk when she struck Japan. A person who can trot through the gladdest of God's countries deserves no sympathy.

Our friendship had the advantage of being unconventional from the start. I rendered her a traveller's service and she was not afraid to be civil

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to me afterwards. This was the first thing which drew me. Then there were others. They came thick and fast. Finally we discovered that we had mutual friends. That is, she mentioned people who were friends of friends of mine. I told her that I knew them as it would make her more sure that I was all that I ought to be. It was not strictly true, and when she taxed me with it afterwards I told her she was worth it. She accepted the explanation.

I used to come to breakfast late so that I could talk to her across the deserted dining room. I got horribly hungry for she never came down until just before the doors closed. Sometimes afterwards—when she would push them open again. The doors were of paper and it didn't matter.

I like a woman who can be lazy at the right end of the day—which is the front end. Early risers are a nuisance and ought to be prohibited by law.

One day one morning—I waxed bold. I had been screwing up my courage for a week. “And what are you going to do this morning?” I asked as I ate my orange. It really wasn't an orange. It was a horrid big thing with a skin like a horse blanket and insides which tasted like medicine.

“I'm going to do another temple” she replied, “It's almost the last.”

“Have you sworn off, or has the supply run out?” I ventured to inquire.

“It's merely a sightseer's vacation.”

“I wish you'd take me with you.” I said this desperately, as a man might confess suddenly to a crime, or propose marriage to a woman of his mother's generation. I was abashed at my boldness. She looked me over. I think I appeared harmless—I felt so.

“Certainly not!” she replied.

I resorted to strategy “I'm sorry. But it probably isn't really worth seeing. One temple is just like another. I don't think I like temples. Why don't you spend your mornings in the hotel gardens, feeding the goldfish?”

She flew to arms in defense of her hobby.

“This is the finest temple in Japan. It's the temple of (never mind the name—I don't remember it). That's where I go with my book when I want to be quiet.”

“How about the beggars and the babies?” I asked, delighted with my success.

“They're a part of the whole.”

“They're the whole of the part—that I detest.” I answered.

“Don't you care for the temples?”

“In a way I do. But I don't want to know who built them—or for what purpose—or in what year of Meiji they were restored by which Daimyo—or what celebrated artist painted the bird—that had to be painted into a cage—to prevent it from pecking at the eyes of the goldfish in the water—which the idol wept—when he thought what a wonderful thing the artist who made the temple had done or—.”

“Oh! be quiet, *please!* Old things appeal to me. Did you never feel that you could sympathise with ancestor worship?”

I shook my head. “I am afraid not. Didn't have that kind of ancestors.”

I had finished my breakfast long ago. I ordered strawberries and the mechanical doll who served me twittered “very sorry.” They were out of strawberries. So I took oatmeal. I would have taken pigs feet to gain time.

“Where is your bump of veneration?”

“It's a depression I'm afraid. But I could venerate some things—if I might.” I added.

She ignored the remark. “I admire a people who are so faithful to their past, who cling to it.” Her eyes were dreamy. By the way, they were blue, those eyes, and the deepest blue I had ever seen. When you looked into them you never seemed to get to the bottom. It always makes me dizzy to walk along great heights and look down.

“Don't you think,” I suggested gently, “That in the name of common sense, not to mention common decency and possibly one or two other things, that a certain discrimination should be exercised? There are pasts and pasts.”

“I was speaking of the past of a nation, not of an individual.”

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"When two or more people are banded together in the form of a nation, they can do more harm than could possibly occur to the mind of one poor, solitary sinner." I proclaimed. "If Japan is beautiful in the present let her past rest. It needs it. Those Shoguns and things must have made it awfully tired."

"Are you as flippant with the present as you are with the past?" She asked scornfully.

"I'm not flippant with the past. I'm only flippant with my friends. I'm very distant with the past—very much so. I'd like to strike it off my visiting list."

She laughed and left the room. I took my cigar and a piece of bread for the goldfish.

II.

She didn't seem particularly surprised when she saw me at the temple. I had prepared all sorts of explanations, but I had no need of them. She was sitting just without the main shrine on a platform which overlooked the valley. I began to think that temples had their uses—as frames. I spoke to the picture, indicating the frame with a waive of my hand. "Excellent example of the work of Kuagi-ni-Midgo who flourished in the reign of Koaki-ni-Kodzu, just before . . ."

"I know all about it" she interrupted. "Though I must admit that your names mean as much as the real ones. The Buddha is supposed to be remarkably fine."

"It looks like a relative of mine." I observed looking at her book. It was a paper bound pamphlet which undertook in twenty pages to explain Buddhism, Infinity, the Hereafter and the nature of God, all in bad English.

"I thought this a good place to study it in," she explained.

"Pray accept me as a teacher."

"How funny! I couldn't imagine you teaching anything."

"Oh, but I can. Let me demonstrate the theory of emanation and absorption. Its apropos."

"Pray proceed."

"Well, for instance, you emanate things and I absorb them."

"Such as what?"

"Repose, for one thing. You are repose personified. You might ask me to join you."

She quoted from her Murray. "The temple is opened to all visitors during the hours from eight to six."

I threw myself at her feet. "Now I have absorbed your repose. There is your demonstration. What next?"

"There is the doctrine of existence and non existence" she suggested.

"I was in Kyoto. That was non existence. You came. Now it is existence. Ask me something difficult."

"If you talk like that I shall go away."

"That would be inconsistent. You are a searcher after Light and you would discourage me from telling the truth."

"Its not the truth, but no matter." She opened the book and read. "On arriving at the perfection of pure action one becomes a Buddha." Don't you think that a beautiful idea? Its a religion of hope and incentive."

"Not to me. I should hate to think you'd ever become anything with a face like that in the temple there."

She turned the pages of her book. "Here is something which I don't altogether grasp.

Let us cite an analogy to throw light on the above doctrine. A gold lion is made of gold by a smith. The figure once forged may be transformed at any time. It is certainly gold throughout but it has not the true nature of a lion; so we must say that the lion is nothing but a mere figure, having an apparent existence by virtue of the cause-and-condition (the gold and the smith). Existence and Non-existence pervade the gold lion and are absolute truth. Any one who does not recognize the gold lion to be the result of cause and condition, may be said to be ignorant of its true nature. And anyone who persists that the lion is nothing, because he regards only the gold and negates the existence of the lion, denies too much. If one takes the form of it for permanent existence, he is said to have a misconception of existence. Buddha would class all such persons as being in error.'

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"What do you gather from that?"

"I think Buddha guessed right for once. Read it backward and make the lion an ass and the whole thing will be clear. It reminds me of an aunt of mine who is a Christian Scientist."

"Its certainly perplexing" she said laughing. She had wonderful white teeth and lips which suggested warmer things than Buddhist doctrines.

It was a glorious sunlit morning. Japan can apologize more gracefully after a long spell of rainy weather than any country on earth. It had poured incessantly for five days, and now on the sixth the moisture glistened on every leaf. The toy people in the valley below were swarming in and out of their toy houses and up and down their toy streets. Nature smiled and man smiled with her. The deep tones from the bell of another temple came to us across the valley. Down in the heart of the city a temple roof and a factory chimney; Romance and Utility; the Past and the Present, were dwelling side by side.

Man has never invented an instrument for correctly measuring time. I have a watch which cost several hundred dollars and rings bells when you press a lever and yet I know that this particular morning was three hours shorter than those of preceeding days. I had just joined her when she discovered that it was time to go home to lunch.

"What a bother!" she said. "I could spend the day!"

"You shall," I answered. I had foreseen this and ordered a lunch, the like of which was never before sent out from the hotel. "Luncheon will be served right here in ten minutes."

She demurred at first, but I overruled her. "This is the most proper place in the world" I explained. "Right in plain sight of the city and on temple grounds. If you will only stay, I'll go away, if you like, and eat with the *ricksha* men."

"What nonsense!" she answered. "I accept with pleasure."

"My lunch is the best thing about me" I proclaimed when they had spread it all out before us. There were salads and all sorts of things done up in little wooden packages. She took a child's delight in investigating the mysteries of a crockery jar built in tiers like a pagoda. It contained salt, pepper, butter and cheese, each in its own little story. "I must send word to the hotel" she said.

It must not be imagined that my Divinity - for as such I had begun to regard her - was travelling alone. She had a duenna in the shape of an aunt whose expenses I judged she was paying. I gathered this from the way Divinity allowed herself to be bored by the old party. Nothing short of the role of hostess would have justified such submission. The aunt had blue eyes like Divinity, only very much diluted. She had the sort of a voice which belongs to those people who use the word "awful" as an adverb. Moreover, she was interested in Japanese morals and other improper things. If it hadn't been for Divinity, I think she might have become a reformer.

She sent word to her aunt that she would not be home and having soothed her conscience ate her lunch without self-consciousness. I admired her ability to do an unconventional thing without dwelling upon its unconventionality.

I had known her a month or longer. And we had been alone together many times. I blamed myself when I thought of the time I had lost. I looked for an opening and resolved to make one.

"Hotels" I observed, "are only made to sleep in. We should lunch like this every day."

"Its the novelty that makes the attraction" she replied.

"Some things never lose their novelty."

"Such as what?"

"Well, love for instance." That would do for a starter. I helped myself to more salad.

"Oh!"

"If you were in love, do you think it would lose its novelty?"

"Well really! I—How should I know?"

"Haven't you ever been?"

"Oh, well; yes. I think so. When I was a little girl."

"Tell me about it."

"I was in love with the little boy who lived across the street."

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"Really in love?"

"Oh yes, really—and desperately. I just worshipped him."

"Fortunate youth. What became of him?"

"I don't know. He went away. West, I think. His parents were poor. I wonder what it would be like to care for a grown up person like that and be grown up yourself?"

"Don't think it. Grown up people never care like that—not when they're really grown up. It's different."

"Are you always cynical?"

"It's not cynicism. It's philosophy. Philosophy is cynicism properly digested. Cynicism is the way a moral dyspeptic absorbs philosophy. But seriously, it's true. Love, like everything else, is biggest in childhood and dwindles with maturity."

We had finished and I lit a cigarette. She looked across the valley at the hills beyond.

"I suppose if I met him now, I should laugh. I hope I never do."

"Let's hope you don't. Horrid little freckled faced boy!"

"He wasn't at all!"

"I know he must have been. They all are. Did he know it?"

"That I loved him?"

"Please don't put it that way. That you were experiencing the common form of youthful insanity which goes by the name calf love. Because calves never have it I suppose."

"Of course I never told him. I would have died first. Oh, he was a splendid little fellow! So manly. He worked so hard at school and afterwards he used to earn money to help his mother. She was a widow. Poor little chap! I wonder how the world has gone with him." She spoke wistfully and there were actually traces of tears in those wonderful eyes. She was the type of woman to whose eyes tears often come but from which they seldom fall. Such natures have deep sympathies and strong control. They are the natures to tie to.

"He's probably made a fortune by this time. He's the Mayor of Minneapolis—or some other horrid place."

"You speak as though it was ages ago" she laughed. "Do I look so very old?"

"It was; ages and ages ago. You have outgrown it. It belongs to a previous existence."

"And you?"

"Oh, my affairs were legion. I began, as you did, when I was a child. But unlike you I didn't know when to stop. I had seven or eight before I was eighteen. When I was eighteen it was serious—very serious."

"Tell me about it."

"I will. She was a married woman. You needn't look shocked. Everything was very proper. She was about thirty-five and had a husband of about sixty. She also had children. One was a dreadful little girl of eleven. The mother used to bribe her to come into the room and do kittenish things like a girl of six. I worshipped her—the mother I mean. I used to kiss her hand and give her presents. I had it all figured out that we were to be married. Her husband couldn't live more than ten years and then she would only be forty-five. I used to go around inspecting women of forty-five and trying to think how young they really were. It was hard work. Perhaps that's the reason I fell out of love. I always hated work."

"What a character you must be!" she exclaimed.

"But that's not the worst of it. I've been in hot water all my life until five years ago. After I got over that attachment there were a few others. Not serious. I was blasé and too much a man of the world. I couldn't take women seriously. I took nothing seriously. I was cursed in being rich, so I didn't have to. Well, when I was twenty-five—I—Oh, Lord! I went and did for myself!"

She was giving me close attention. "What did you do?" she asked. I fancied she was interested.

"I got engaged. She was a slip of a girl of nineteen. Very pretty, insipid style—you know." She nodded. "Yes, I know. Go on."

"Well. There's no place to go to, you see,—the truth is that,—in a way,—nothing radical having been done and—and—"

"Oh, for goodness sake! Out with it!"

"You might say we are engaged yet."

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‘ Then why didn’t you say so in the first place? when are you going to be married ’

I resented the calm way in which she took it. ‘ I don’t want to be married—exactly.’

She laughed merrily and I was compelled to join in “You see,” I said ‘I haven’t seen her in five years and I know I don’t love her, and I honestly haven’t any idea that she still loves me or that she ever did. We never were *lovers*; that is, she never was I think she thought it would please her mother and—oh hang it all! It was October and the foliage was turning and we were alone in the country!’

She didn’t seem disposed to treat the matter as a jest “But surely, you must have some sort of an understanding You say you haven’t seen her for five years. Do you correspond?’

“Yes in a way—at intervals’

“As lovers?”

“Oh no. That is, - well of course I sometimes write things that—well, that I wouldn’t write to your Aunt, you know’

“I’m not so sure of that. Is this why you have stayed away so long?”

“Yes She thinks I am in business here in the East

“Are you?”

“No.”

“Then the truth is, you haven’t the manhood to write to the girl and tell her honestly that you want to break the engagement.”

I nearly jumped off the plateau. “Would you consider that manly?” I demanded. “Has a man a right to break an engagement?”

She reflected. “I don’t see why not” she said, at length. “I think that is just the distinction which should be made between marriage and engagement. If the engagement is to bind, for all time, why the marriage at all? If I was engaged I’d stop at the altar if I thought better of it.”

“Ah, but that’s different. You’re a woman. A man who jilted a girl would be thought a cad.”

“I think it’s infinitely worse to act as you have for five years. That’s cowardly.”

“Perhaps it is. I never thought of it that way before. Ought I to go home and say, ‘My dear young lady, I am ready for the sacrifice!’”

“You might write and break it off.”

‘Well; the difficulty about that is that it’s all so very vague. A man would seem like an ass if he wrote to a girl breaking off an engagement, which didn’t exist, wouldn’t he?’

“What’s the record since then?”

“The last five years? Nothing. I’ve been travelling. Twice I went home when she was in Europe. I learned my lesson. I wish I knew what to do.”

“Do you mean to tell me you haven’t been in love with any one for five years?”

“Absolutely—until—”

“You’re burning your coat with your cigarette ash.”

“I—You must think me a fool!”

She laughed. ‘Not necessarily. Fools are not smart enough to run away from a woman they don’t want to marry. They go through with it and ruin a couple of lives. You’re a bit of a fool on that one subject, perhaps.’

‘Do you imagine that I couldn’t love if I met the right woman?’ I demanded.

She rose to her feet. “I haven’t the least doubt you could: It seems to be your specialty. No, please don’t come with me. I’m going shopping. You may put me into my ‘rickisha, if you like.”

“Remember one thing.” I said, as we parted. “I’ve a clean record for five years.”

“I’m not sure that that’s not the worst part of it,” she retorted, “Good-bye.”

III.

The next day the weather had a relapse. When I awoke, it was pouring in torrents on the roof above my head and when I looked out of the window

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it was a mist in the valley, a fog around the hotel and higher up the mountain it became a cloud. What an idiotic thing language is!

When I reached the breakfast-room Divinity had breakfasted and gone. Later, swathed in a mackintosh and fortified against bad smells with a pipe, I went for a long tramp. I did five or six miles through the streaming, steaming streets. It cleared my head, which needed clearing.

When a man passes thirty and is still in a fog about his love affairs he is in a truly bad way. There is some excuse for twenty's not knowing its own mind; absolutely none for thirty. At the latter age a man should be able to say positively. "I love this person" or "I do not love this person."

And this was precisely what I was unable to do. Of course I knew myself to be in love with Divinity, but that was just wherein lay my quandary. I had suffered with the same malady so many times before. Often during the past five years I had laid down the law to myself in this wise. "On certain subjects you are an ass and not to be trusted. If you find yourself yielding to the fascinations of a young and comely female - flee."

Then, at other times, it would please me to view the matter in an altogether different light. I would then regard my tendency to inconstancy as a rather charming characteristic; one to be encouraged rather than not. I was a strong lover of nature. Why I do not know, unless it is that a nature lover can be lazier than any one else. There are depths of laziness which are open to him alone. So I found in my love for nature an excuse for my inconstancy. A man is not excepted to love all nature at the same time. He is better off than the proverbial sailor for he finds his love, not only in every port, but on every mountain top and in every smiling inland valley. Nature is not a mistress; she is a whole seraglio.

Something told me that Divinity was Divinity and that there would never be another like her. But I knew my weakness. A man who has ten faults and knows the whole ten is better off than the man who has a single fault of which he is ignorant.

My fault of faults was susceptibility and on that account I had fully resolved not to marry. And now a person in white gowns who haunted temples and read books on Buddhism threatened the whole fabric of my resolutions with collapse. It did collapse and sooner than I expected.

When I returned to the hotel she was in the deserted reading room (it was an off season and we were the only people in the hotel) before an open fire reading a Kobe newspaper.

"Any news about Buddha?" I inquired.

She gave me a wonderful smile and her hand. "Good morning. Have you been for a walk? How energetic!"

"I *have* that kind of energy. The kind which sets people to tramping about the country with no object. I lack the sort which makes them stay indoors and do things."

"You should have been a farmer. Did it ever occur to you?" She looked fairer with each succeeding day. I made up my mind to make love to her. Love is a peculiar thing. It suggests itself to a man; it must be suggested to a woman.

"Yes," I replied. "It has occurred to me. Most things have. But I shouldn't be a success. I could never bear to raise cabbages when roses could be made to grow out of the same sort of ground."

"A man who spends his life raising roses finds them all thorns in the end. You'd better pay some attention to the cabbages before all your rose leaves fall."

"Why should they ever fall? There's a new crop every season."

"They will fall because it's the law of the world that men should work and not play. You are a disciple of idleness."

"And why not? If it's a good, innocent sort of idleness?"

"Is it?"

"Oh well, I—look here? We're discussing a general proposition."

"I wouldn't give a fig for a general proposition that couldn't be backed up by a good, practical illustration."

"I don't want to be a 'good practical illustration.' My ambitions don't run that way."

"No? which way do they run?"

"I am afraid you will laugh if I tell you."

"I promise not to."

"I want to be an author."

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She took the statement as a matter of course.

"Then why don't you write something?"

"I have—several books. Some people liked them. Some people have wretched taste."

"I don't remember ever having heard of you."

"What charming frankness! Why should you? I have written three novels and—a full confession is good for the soul—a volume of verse."

"You don't mean it! And I've set you down as a dawdler. It was mean of you not to tell me."

"Not at all. An author is a dawdler. That is, the sort of an author I am. People who write books about the atmosphere, and religion and politics and how to cook, are different. They're useful members of society. I don't know enough to write things like that."

"Were your books successful?"

"One of them sold twenty thousand—'The Lady of June.'"

"What! Are you—"

"Yes. It's my alias."

"It's a charming little story. I cried over it."

"That settles it. I'll never write another line as long as I live. What business have I to go about making people cry?"

"I've never read any of your poems."

"Don't, they're far worse than the novels. They—They're the limit."

"I will judge for myself. Have you written anything lately?"

"Yes. The last one was four years ago. I'm too old now. I'll be thirty-two in the autumn."

"And to think that a man like you wrote that beautiful love story!"

"Look here—what do you mean by that? Why shouldn't I—what's the matter with me, anyway?"

"I beg your pardon. I was thinking of what you told me yesterday. I wonder if all the men who write beautiful things about love are triflers with life."

"I'm not a trifler with life. I'm a poor, weak specimen who is trampled on by your sex."

"Then you *must* be a poor, weak specimen! A man who allows himself to be trampled on by one woman is a poor specimen. By more than one, a mighty poor specimen!"

"How old are you?"

"Why should I tell you that?"

"Nothing. Only when it comes to your judgment of the faults of others you have the charity of nineteen. I might be a lot worse than I am."

"There's a whole miserable philosophy in that sentence. You should say that you might be a lot *better* than you are. Then there would be some hope for you. I am twenty-seven."

"Then you have developed slowly. You're unformed. You have a great deal to learn. You—"

"Go on."

"You're altogether charming. I'm falling in love with you." I took the plunge boldly and felt better.

She laughed. "I more than half suspected it. Since when?"

"Couldn't you possibly take me seriously—in that way?"

"Not possibly."

"What right had you to suspect it?"

"Your record. If I were not here it would be my aunt."

"Oh, I say now; really!"

"Be careful. You mustn't be rude."

"I know I mustn't. I'm always doing things I mustn't. Now I've gone and fallen desperately in love with you and I've told you all about myself so that there's no chance—so that you can't possibly—can you?"

"No."

"You've no heart. You've led me on. You've encouraged me. You've confessed me. You've been adorable and you've deliberately and wilfully done everything you could to add to and aggravate your adorableness. You've given me every reason to believe—being the only man in the hotel—that you've done it for me."

"Was it so dreadfully forced?"

"Not a bit. It was the most natural thing in the world. You were perfection to start with. I love you."

"Would you consider me personal if I reminded you that you're engaged to a girl at home?"

"*Very* personal, actually rude. Unpardonably presumptuous. Besides, it isn't the truth. It isn't really an engagement and if it is I'll make her break it off. I'll be a beast. I'll confess dreadful things to her. I'll get drunk and go and call on her mother. No I won't; I'll do the breaking myself. You said yesterday I could. Wasn't *that* encouraging me?"

She was confused. I could see it. She changed color. I gloated over the change. "Oh, I had no idea then that—." She stopped abruptly.

"That what?"

She arose. "What nonsense you have been talking! I'm not going to take you seriously."

"Oh but you must! I *will* be taken seriously. I love you." As I spoke I had taken her hand.

Real life is the clumsiest stage manager in the world. She delights in anti-climax. Just then the Aunt appeared on the scene and talked for half an hour about the high prices asked for satsuma. Then she carried Divinity off to lunch.

IV.

"Is there nothing in the world," I asked, "which could induce you to look with favor on the holy estate of matrimony?"

"I don't know," she answered. "A man might."

She was in the garden back of the hotel and was leaning with her head on her hand watching a great hungry gold fish which came to the surface and gobbled the bread crumbs she had thrown it. How beautiful she was! Her soft brown hair was fixed in a new way puffed out at the back of her neck and brushed high off her forehead. The lines of her figure suggested perfect maturity as well as perfect grace. She had a voice as gentle as the the voice of our own good resolution—only there was more force and conviction to it.

"I have an idea" I pursued. "a well conceived idea, that I am the man, selected by Providence for that undertaking."

I had been awake half the night thinking it over. Yes. I did love her. It was really love this time. Nothing else, none of the others, had ever counted.

"How absurd!" she murmured, but I could see that she flushed.

"Please define definitely."

"What?"

"The obstacles."

"I haven't time. It only lacks two hours of lunch time."

"Are they so many?"

"Well.....perhaps not so many. But they are insurmountable."

"Firstly?"

"I'm not sure that I love you."

Everything in the universe began to sing song. "Not sure? How can you doubt it?"

She laughed. Nature's music was silenced in very shame of its inferior performance. "I didn't mean to say that." She admitted, with a blush.

"Of course you didn't. I accept your apology. But please don't let it occur again. You couldn't doubt it. You're not that kind of a person. You know your own mind. You're strong minded. You show it by wanting me to—do things."

"Aside from that—you're, you're not the kind of a person I think I want to marry."

"You mean I'm not your ideal?"

"No. I haven't any ideal but you lack too many qualities which I have always considered necessary to a wife's happiness."

"Such as what?"

"Constancy—for one thing."

"What do you want me to swear by? And what right have you to set me down as inconstant? Those other girls? They didn't count. I've told you so before. They were only a phase. They—"

"How do I know I'm not a phase?"

"You're not. You couldn't be if you tried. There's nothing *phasey*

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about you. You suggest permanency. You'r substantial, you'r solid, you'r weighty, you'r heavy, you'r—."

"Heavens what a picture!"

"I m referring to your character, not your person, which is—."

"That will do—please."

I looked the admiration which she would not allow me to express. "Try me!" I implored

"Ah, that's not possible!" she exclaimed sadly. "How can a woman try a man in our generation? What is there to try him with? We ve just got to take you on faith and take our chances. It s a losing game."

"Stuff and nonsense! There are as many things to be done now as there ever were. The age of real chivalry is just dawning. There's more real knighthood in me than there is in all the old wooden-faced Daimyos and Shoguns that ever disfigured a temple wall. I ll go home and get to work. I ll go to congress. It only costs six thousand dollars where I come from."

"I don t want you to do that. You've a profession. You've shown me that. Write another book."

"I will." I exclaimed, "I ll write a wonder. If you ll marry me."

"No I won't. If I did you d never have anything to make you write another. I m not such a fool."

"Is it your idea to prolong our engagement until I have written enough to make a fair sized library? May I ask that you marry me when I m sixty, whether I have finished or not?"

"I was not aware that the engagement you speak of, existed."

"No? Then I m glad you heard it first from me. I ll send you a letter confirming it, this afternoon."

She laughed. "There s another obstacle. The girl at home."

"Oh bother! I ll write at once and announce my engagement to you. That s a delicate and considerate way of breaking off our understanding. It assumes nothing and settles a great deal. She couldn t expect me to be a polygamist, you know."

"I wish she d sue you for breach of promise." She declared, viciously. "It's all you deserve."

"She s not that kind. Besides there isn't any to breach. She's in love with another man by this time. Women are fickle."

She fell silent and I went over our conversation. Decidedly it gave me reason to hope. I would hope. It's the occupation I'm best fitted for any way. I detest despondent people.

"Shall the book be prose or verse? I'm going to write it to you to your heart, if you have any."

"Then make it prose, by all means. Poets are apt to change their inspiration with their metre."

"And when it s finished?"

"You ve no idea how much happier you ll feel."

"Come now. I'm a bit of a business man with all my nonsense. Will you marry me when it's finished?"

"No, Oh no—. Please."

"Then I won't write it. I ll never write another line. I ll commit suicide and then I'll go to the dogs. You're a heartless, brutal, unfeeling inconsiderate."

She had risen to her feet and was, I thought a shade paler. "Don't go," I cried. "I really didn't mean it!"

"When you've finished it—if it's a good book—a successful book—I'll —We'll talk about getting engaged—."

All the blood in my body went to my head. It had to go somewhere for my heart was working over time. I advanced to her and held out my arms. "Darling!—and until then?"

"I m keeping you from your work." She said, and with that she went in search of her aunt.

V.

Will a man work? Will a bird sing in the mating season 'til it all but bursts its little throat? Will a priest pray to go to heaven?

During the weeks and months which followed I was a different man. I worked ten hours a day—feverishly. The only hours I allowed myself were ones when she and I were together. We talked of everything in the world but love for she had placed love on her conversational blacklist. As I felt the book growing each day and worked out the thread of my story I felt a joy in the work which I had never known before.

It wasn't a love story. I was too much in love myself to write a love story. It was a tale of adventure and one of the characters got horribly in the way toward the end. There was nothing to do with him. So I murdered him. I mean, of course, I had one of the other characters do it but the crime was mine all the same. He stood between me and the finishing of that book and the finishing of that book meant things I dared not think about. I used to dream of her lips.

I learned to love those characters. They were more than real to me. Each one of them was hustling night and day to help me in my love. I cared nothing for literary merit. I would do things with that later on, when I had leisure and she and I—joyful thought—were together for all time. I had impossible things happen in that book with real relish. If a July snow storm in Aden would have helped, in it would have gone.

And yet the book wasn't altogether bad. It had some good points. One was it taught me how much a man can do in a little time when he gets at it. This is very useful knowledge because it encourages you to spend so much time in idleness. A man who works day and night for a week, can make a record, which will enable him to loaf through the next three months serene in the consciousness of what he can do when he wants to.

And then, one glad morning, about three months after I had gotten to work, all the light went out of the world.

We were sitting in the secluded little garden which we had both come to love. I was talking, and she was listening. She would sit for a long time looking at me with eyes which said that I was a mystery and so was life but she hoped for the best. She had come to trust me. I could see that. The most trusting women of all are the common sense ones who have thought it all out and reached the age of thirty without marrying. The trust of a young girl is nothing to it. A girl's trust is her weakness; a woman's, her religion.

"You look charming this morning." I had been saying. "I feel for you a distinct and very friendly veneration. Confound your blacklist. Veneration laughs at locksmiths—I mean at blacklists. Are you going to tyrannize over me after we're married?"

"Take care! That's getting on forbidden ground."

"I don't care if it is. I've been corked up long enough. There are things I want to say to you. Very important things."

"Then finish your book."

"I will. It will be finished this afternoon. Its finished now; All but the final touches. Those are done in proof. Then it has to be done all over again—after its published."

"After its published?"

"Yes. By the critics."

"Oh! I see."

I took her hand and kissed it. This much of liberty she allowed me. Just then a servant of the hotel appeared on the scene with a letter. He came up and handed it to me with a profound bow. When we were alone I glanced at the envelope.

"Its from her."

"From who?"

"The girl at home."

"She's in deep mourning, apparently."

I looked at the letter again. "Why; so she is! I hadn't noticed it. Its something new. I wonder who for?"

"Read it and see."

It was dated San Francisco and began "My dear George." George is my name. I never mentioned it until I had to because I am ashamed of it. However, its one of the very few objectionable things connected with my personality for which I am not responsible.

I read on. She announced the death, within a month, of both her father and mother and then told how, in the examination of the affairs of

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the estate, they had learned that what had been supposedly a large fortune had dwindled away to nothing, as a result of speculation.

"Her father and mother are both dead." I said, pausing in the reading, which was a refreshing thing to do, for she wrote one of those across-the-paper-in-four-directions letters which are not easy to decipher, "and she has lost all her money. They were supposed to be very rich, but it seems the father speculated."

"Poor girl! Why! what on earth is the matter?"

I had jumped to my feet with an exclamation. No, I may as well be honest. I'm afraid it was an oath—a mild oath of course, but still an oath, for at the beginning of a new paragraph I read this

"I have thought it all out, Dear, and I feel that it is the only thing to do, for I do not know that you can leave your business and it takes so long to get a letter. I am coming out on the next steamer and we will be married in Yokohama as soon as I get there. I have all your beautiful letters with me, Dear. I know you have had reason to think me cold but it was really because I wasn't sure I loved you. All this trouble has given me a clearer vision, Sweetheart. You can never say I am cold again."

There was more of the same sort, but that was enough. I was sick at heart.

"Oh my God!" I cried "What a horrible mess."

"What is it?" she asked in a pained voice.

"It,—I,—she,—Oh! Read it! Read it!"

She took the letter and read it through to the end while I sat with my head in my hands trying to realize the situation.

"Well?" she said at length.

I looked up. I could gather nothing from her face. "So you found her letters cold, did you?"

I groaned. "Oh. Don't!"

She got up and walked to the end of the garden where there was a terrace. She stood for a long time looking off over the valley. Finally she came back and stood in front of the bench.

"What are you going to do?"

"Do? what can I do? She'll be here in a week. Oh! What a farce; what a tragedy! I can't marry her. I *won't* marry her. A girl has no right to do a thing like that. It's not maidenly. It's not decent! Why under the sun didn't she give me a chance to come home?"

"It's altogether your own fault. You let her understand that you were in business out here and couldn't get away. Oh! I'm afraid you can't blame her for this!"

It was my turn to pace up and down the walk. "One of the bad features of the whole business is" I said, "that she thought we were engaged all along—"

"I imagine that she was justified"

"And all that time she was supposed to be an heiress. Don't you see the point of it all? She wouldn't do this if she had a fortune. I don't believe she cares a rap for me. But I couldn't face the world if I were to break with her just when she's lost it all and—Oh, it's horrible?"

She had been sitting on the bench apparently lost in thought. Suddenly she said "You don't love her. Are you sure you love me?"

"Absolutely. I never half guessed how much until now."

"Then don't marry her. You've a right to your life. A woman never hesitates to break with a man she no longer loves; surely a man is entitled to the same privilege. What do you care for the world's opinion? Love is above everything. I love you."

As she spoke the last words her voice broke. She was leaning forward searching my face with her eyes as though to read my soul. The air was charged with the intensity of human emotion. Instinctively we both felt that the crisis of our lives had come.

As for me—everything seemed to be going from me at once. "I hardly think you understand" I said. "This girl will be in Yokohama in a week, alone and friendless and relying on my love and protection. I've been a bit of a cad, I know, but I don't think I've ever been quite the scoundrel. I can never tell you how much I feel the wrong I've done you if you love me. But I—"

I stopped for she was weeping. "Oh! Thank God!" She said,

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"Thank God!"

"You—you didn't mean it?"

"No! *of course* I didn't. I wanted to see if you were what I had hoped. Oh, my darling. You've made me so happy!"

"Happy? This is no time for happiness! This is the deluge." In spite of my words there was a feeling very near to peace in my heart and the shadow her words had cast was lifted.

She looked up, smiling "I suppose you can't understand," she said, "men seldom do. But I've not been happy all these months. I've been in doubt. I knew I loved you but I had no reason to trust you. And I was afraid. It's all such a terrible risk with a woman, dear. She has to take the leap in the dark, usually, and trust to God and her faith to bring things right. A woman's love is not like a man's."

I sat on the bench beside her and took her hand in mine. Together we watched the sunlight shimmer on the backs of the goldfish as they swam about the little pond. "Tell me," I asked, softly. "What *is* a woman's love?"

There is nothing further to record about that morning except that when we parted, I had come into a kingdom of happiness which passes far beyond that of mere possession of a heart's desire. I wanted to be alone to dream and come into a fuller knowledge of the love which is religion.

That is probably the reason I met her aunt who detained me for one mortal hour talking about her observations of Japanese home life.

VI.

Eight days later, late in the afternoon, I stood in front of the Grand Hotel in Yokohama and watched a great ship come around Honmoku Point looking like a phantom in the mist and rain. She was a big new liner on her first voyage and she was bringing two prospective brides to their prospective bride-grooms. The other bridegroom was with me and had been fidgeting about all day, waiting. I had done no fidgeting. I was calm. There is a calmness which precedes dissolution. As far as everything I valued in life was concerned, the dissolution was coming as fast as twin screws could carry it.

The other bridegroom and I went out to quarantine in a little launch. There was a high sea running outside the breakwater and the rain was driving in across the bay.

For two mortal hours we waited, drenched to the skin while the little Japanese doctors felt the pulses of American sailors twice their size. We lay alongside the huge black mass and could just see the faces of the passengers peering over the side. My companion soon distinguished his bride but mine was nowhere to be seen. Night fell thick and wet and black and the only thing we could see was the yellow flag at the mast head.

It was down at last and we climbed on board. I stood about for a few moments on the deck and in the passage way while people bumped into me and exchanged greetings and embraces with their families from shore. My fiancée was not to be seen, but I recognized in the purser an old acquaintance. We had spent twenty days together once, helpless in the mid Pacific with a broken shaft. "Ah, there you are!" he said, and I fancied his manner was constrained. "Come into my room a minute, old man."

"Is Miss Warring a passenger?" I asked.

"Yes. Yes. Of course. Come this way."

He led the way to his cabin which was cosy and warm after the wet. Then he rang the bell for a drink and put out a box of cigars. "I say" he began—

"Well say it for I've got to be hunting up my—fiancée."

He sat down on the locker. "I've a slight disappointment for you, old chap. She's not on board. She only came—that is she stopped over—you know—at Honolulu."

"Oh! Then she'll be along, I suppose, on the next boat?"

"Perhaps not the very next, you see. Oh Damn it, I'm no good at this business! Here, read it yourself!" He thrust a letter into my hand and started for the door.

I barred his way. I had no idea of reading through one of her lengthy

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criss cross letters to find out what the matter was. "Hold on!" I cried. "Tell me what the Devil's up—man! Now! at once!"

"Well then—old man, I'm beastly sorry you know and it's a damned outrage, and she isn't worth your worrying about. She—she got off at Honolulu and married a sugar planter. A chap with millions who came over from Frisco. Have a drink. Why! *What on earth?*"

I had looked at my watch and bolted from the room. He caught me just as I reached the gangplank at the foot of which the launch was whistling. I think he thought I was going to jump over-board. He grasped me by the arm. "For God's sake man! be calm—."

"Calm? Don't stop me! I want to catch the night train for Kyoto! Let me go. I'll write you!"

I shook him off and caught the launch just as she was backing off. We left the side of the monster and plowed our way back through the choppy sea to the hatoba. The other bridegroom was on board with his bride. They were making a show of themselves in the cabin. I was the only other passenger on board. I looked through the little port. He was kissing her. "It might have been me!" I sang gleefully. "It might have been me!"

VII.

She adhered to her determination not to marry me until I had written a successful book. So I went home to publish it. We travelled together on the same ship and those days and nights at sea were something never to be forgotten.

I published the book and it was a failure. It deserved to be for a man can not write for a purpose, whether it be love or money, and be proud of what he has written.

When there was no doubt about its being a failure I determined to have it out with her. I was her guest in her home in the country. The aunt was still with us. She had no other family. I meant to retire the aunt.

It was just at sunset when I went in search of her. I found her in the rose garden behind the house. She was gathering roses for the table.

"Divinity" I began. "Here is a letter from the publisher. The book is a flat failure. It won't sell. People don't want it."

She made no reply and I continued. "Are your ambitions so insatiable? Will you never marry me until I have written another successful book?"

"You are young and life is big and so is the world," she said, "write another. Am I not worth it?"

I felt that I had stood for her non-nonsense long enough. I went deliberately up to her and took her in my arms. "I have waited." I exclaimed. "I'll wait no longer. I don't care for the world. You are *my* world."

The roses slipped from her hands and strewed the path at our feet.

"Then your book *is* successful" she said, softly, "for it has pleased the world."

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